

A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
ZEAL,

AGAINST
Immorality and Prophaness

Deliver'd in Two

S E R M O N S

IN

St. Michael Church DUBLIN,

October 29, and November 26. 1699.

D U B L I N,

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SERMONS

IN

St. Martin's Church, DUBLIN

By the Rev. Mr. John Wesley

LONDON: Printed by J. & A. Knapp, 1739.

TO THE
S O C I E T I E S
F O R
REFORMATION of MANNERS.

I Consented the more readily to Publish the following Discourse, least I might be suspected as wanting that Zeal my self, which I Recommended to others, and as Afraid of those Censures, which I Exhorted you to Despise. Since therefore you think the Publication of it, may do some Service to Religion, and Promote that Excellent Undertaking, wherein you have engag'd your selves ; I do willingly put it into your Hands, without making any Apology for those Defects, which may render it lyable to Exceptions : For True Zeal Studies to do Good, rather than to
A 2 Please ;

Please ; To Improve Men in Piety, not to Gratifie a Vain Curiosity. Plain Dealing is a Part of its Character, and it boldly tells Men necessary (tho often disobliging) Truths, being more concern'd that the Food it gives, be Wholesome and Nourishing, than Drest up with great Nicety and Art.

That GOD wou'd Strengthen and Improve your Zeal, and add to your Numbers many more *Zealously Affected in all good things* : That he wou'd Bless your Endeavours, against Vice and Prophaness with Success, and make You happy Instruments of Advancing and Establishing a General Reformation of Manners, and at last Reward your Piety and Zeal, with the Glories and Happiness of Heaven: Is with great Sincerity Pray'd for, by

Your Faithful and
Affectionate Servant

William Hamilton.

Gal. IV. xviii.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.

THE Two great Extremes in Religion opposite to the genuine Spirit of Christianity and equally destructive of it, are a *Cold Indifference* on the one hand ; on the other, an *Intemperate Zeal*. This Transports a Man beyond all bounds of Sobriety and Prudence ; and where the other prevails that Life and Fervour must be wanting, without which we can neither be good Christians our selves, nor successful Instruments in making others so.

So that it is in the Moral as in the Natural World, wherein there are violent Degrees both of Heat and Cold, there are Regions continually expos'd to the Suns hottest Rays, there are others under the constant power of Ice and Snow ; in the one you Freeze, you are Scorch'd in the other.

But still betwixt these Extremes, lye Temperate Climates, where Cold and Heat are regularly divided, where there's enough of each to answer the Necessities of Nature, and Ends of Creation. Thus it is, thus it ought to be in Religion, we are to choose a middle way betwixt the Lethargy of the Careless, and Violence of the Zealot. A Religious warmth shou'd actuate our Spirits, but no Wild-Fire shou'd inflame them. We shou'd have a hearty concern for the Honour of GOD, and the Promotion of Piety, and an equal abhorrence of Prophaness and Vice, but then Modesty and Humility, Sincerity and Prudence, shou'd still accompany our Zeal. It shou'd be Peaceable and Impartial ; its

End manifestly good, its manner of Acting Regular and Legal : And then it wou'd be such *Zeal* as St. Paul recommends to us, *It is good to be Zealously Affected always in a good thing.*

Zeal in the general acceptation of the World, signifies such a fervent emotion of our Spirits, such an inflammation of our Passions and Affections, as makes us pressing and earnest, in the pursuit of any undertaking, together with some degree of Trouble and Impatience, at our being oppos'd in our Designs, and obstructed in the attainment of them. Whatever we vigorously contend for, and prosecute with a strong endeavour, for that thing we may be said to be *Zealous*.

Zeal then resides in the Affections, and has its sway over them; and indeed whenever we are *Zealously Affected*, all our Passions and Affections have new Heat and Vigour infus'd into them, and they become more strong and lively than before.

Our Love fixes on the Object of our *Zeal*, and we grasp it with a powerful bent of desire, and *Zeal* excites our passion of Hatred, against whatever is contrary to the thing we Love. *Zeal* enlivens our hopes with the flattering expectations of success, but sometimes dejects our Spirits, with the apprehensions of disappointment. Great Joy attends a Prosperous *Zeal*, and 'tis hard not to be griev'd, when we are *Zealous* in vain.

So that *Zeal* is strictly nothing else, but a very strong and active warmth of the two prevailing Passions of *Love* and *Hatred*: of *Love* towards what appears Good and Excellent : Of *Hatred* against what we judge Evil and Dangerous ; all our other Passions and Affections ; Fears and Hopes ; Joy and Grief being consequent upon these.

Thus for Example. Do we passionately Love GOD, and Burn with some degree of Angels Fire ? Does he possess the Chief Empire of our Hearts and Minds ; and do we suffer nothing to out-Rival him in our Affections ? The consequence of this must be, that with great industry and application we propagate his Service, and earnestly contend for his Glory ; That we make it the constant matter of our Study and Prayers, to engage others to Love his Name and Obey his Laws. That our most sensible Grief,

Grief shall be the effect of seeing him Dishonour'd, our greatest Joy, of seeing Religion Prosper. And thus we may be said to be *Zealously Affected* towards GOD.

Again, do we hate and abhor Sin with the same degree of Passion, wherewith we love GOD? Do we see something in it contrary to the Divine Nature; to Infinite Purity, Justice and Goodness, as also to our own reason and Happiness? Then we must needs labour to destroy it as a common Enemy; and cannot but mightily Rejoyce, when we do it with any Success. And so we are *Zealously Affected* against Sin.

I own the Word *Zeal* is frequently in Scripture taken in a bad sense; *Emulations* [ζήλος] are by St. Paul reckon'd among *the works of the Flesh*, Gal. 5. 20. And St. James cautions us against [πικρον ζήλος] *Bitter Envy*, or *Zeal*. Ja. 3. 14. And indeed it is the Object of our *Zeal* together with its manner of acting, that renders it either Vertuous or Unlawful, a Duty or a Sin.

If we envy our Neighbours Happiness, are uneasy at his Prosperity, and pleas'd with his Misfortunes: Then is our *Zeal* highly Wicked, it is the prevailing Quality, the very Essence of the Devil. But if our *Zeal* fixes upon a right Object, proposes as its end something morally good; and prosecutes that end by fair justifiable Methods: Then is it a Commendable and Christian *Zeal*.

But now to render our *Zeal* truly such, these two Qualifications are necessary: That it be constant and lasting; and that it be employed in a good thing.

I. Our *Zeal* must be constant and lasting. It is good to be *Zealously Affected* *always*. True *Zeal* is no sudden Heat, no violent Transport, nor gust of Passion, which is vehement for a while but soon blows over; but is a constant Religious frame of Mind. 'Tis true it is not always upon the stretch, nor acts to the utmost of its force, yet is it habitually dispos'd to it. Like Fire it is ever moving, yet burns not still alike, but is sometimes blown up into a Flame.

But that which in the Second place Consecrates our *Zeal*, and renders it such as St. Paul's was, and such as he proposes to us as excellent and necessary, is the goodness of its Object. *It is good to be Zealously Affected always, provided it be in a good thing.*

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For the more intense our *Zeal* is, the greater mischief it does, if we mistake in the Object of it: As the sharper the Weapon, and the more violent the Blow, the deeper, the more dangerous must be the Wound. And both Sacred and Prophane History afford us many melancholly instances of the dismal effects of a *Misguided Zeal*, which being mistaken in its Object, and over violent in its degree, has prov'd fatal to Religion, and set the World on Fire.

But now since the case is so, since *Zeal* which is not determin'd to a right Object is generally hurtful and always vain; the great Question is, what is the proper Object of Religious *Zeal*, and what is *that good thing wherein it is good to be always Zealously Affected?*

This is on all hands allow'd to be *that* (what ever *that* particularly may be) whereby the Glory of God is Promoted, Religion Strengthen'd, the good of others and our own Salvation Advanc'd and Secur'd.

So far there is no Controversie, and all persuasions agree. But the misery is, when Men come to enter upon Particulars, their *Zeal* is for the most part confin'd to the interest and opinions of a Party, to things of smaller Concernment and Importance, to the externals of Religion, and modes Worship, things wherein Men never did, nor ever will agree. And while they nicely dispute and eagerly contend about these, they too often overlook *The weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith. The Life of Religion, Piety and Virtue.*

It is very true, that nothing in *Religion* shou'd be esteem'd little or inconsiderable; if it belongs to *Religion* at all it must be of moment and challenges our regard. Yet it will be easily acknowledged, that some things of greater necessity than others, and tho nothing is small enough to fall below our notice, yet what is of greatest Weight deserves our first and greatest *Zeal*; and as our Saviour speaks in a Parallel case, *the one we shou'd be sure to do, yet so as not to leave the other undone.* Mat. 23. 23.

Those things therefore which the Natural Reason of Mankind approves, & all the differing Parties of Christians agree in as good
and

and excellent, those are undoubtedly the fittest Objects of a Christian's Zeal, and the *good things* wherein we ought to be most *Zealously Affected*. Such are the great and substantial Parts of our Duty to GOD and our Neighbour, the constant exercise of *Piety* and *Devotion* towards the one, of *Justice*, and *Charity* towards the other : The attainment of the particular Virtues of the *Christian Life* ; such as *Humility*, *Meekness*, *Patience*, *Self-denial*, and the like ; and promoting as effectually as we can the Practice of them in others. And such likewise in a particular manner are, suppressing publick and scandalous Immoralities, and restraining the progress of Vice, by a just Execution of our Laws against it, stemming the Torrent of Impiety and Prophaness, and correcting Lewd and Disorderly Practices. *Zeal* that is employ'd in such things as these is truly Glorious, and it is good to be *Zealously Affected* always in them : It is good to be active and industrious, constant and indefatigable, in so Divine a Service ; a Service that has all the Encouragements of Earth and Heaven, to invite us to it ; intitles us here to GOD's particular Grace and Favour, and to extraordinary degrees of Glory hereafter.

This *my Brethren* is the good thing wherein you have been, and I hope still are so *Zealously Affected*. You have stood in the Gap, and oppos'd that Flood of Wickedness, which not long since, had almost overwhelm'd us. You have in some measure check'd those Crimes, which heretofore were publickly committed, with Impunity, and without shame. Your Endeavours and Examples have gain'd many Protestants to Piety, which after long languishing, begins to recover both Strength and Courage ; and to shine forth like that *Great Light which rules and makes the Day* ; tho' like the same Sun, its Brightness is sometimes obscur'd by Clouds : Its Branches are adorn'd with very fair Blossoms, which promise a plentiful Stock of excellent Fruit. You have engag'd in a Service acceptable to good Men, and (what is infinitely more valuable) pleasing to GOD himself, and you may be assur'd, you shall never want their Prayers, nor his Blessing. A Service so Heavenly, that it renders the meanest concern'd in it truly Honourable, and adds more than a Title, an Estate or even a *Crown*, to the

the lustre and dignity of the Greatest. A Service which we are all oblig'd to encourage and promote, according to our different Capacities and Conditions; if we are Ministers, by earnest Exhortations and good Example: If Magistrates, by a just and impartial exercise of our Authority: And if we are but Christians, we may be useful to it, by the sincerity and constancy of our Prayers.

Now the First of these is, what at present my Office and your Desires oblige me to Perform. I shall therefore testify *my own Zeal*, to the great Work you have taken in hand, by offering the best Motives I am able to Excite and Confirm yours: That to your Zeal may never languish, nor your Affections to your Masters service abate and cool: But that this Heavenly Flame of *True Zeal* may Burn Brighter and Stronger in your Souls to the last; may in the Evening of Life maintain its Noon-Day Vigour, until with the Spirits wherein it dwelt, it be Translated to the other World, and from the Zeal of Men, be refin'd to that of Angels: That so likewise, unreasonable Calumnies and Censures may never divert you from your Noble Resolutions, but that you may become more Fixed, Courageous, and Undaunted, in advancing Piety and suppressing Vice; more earnest in your Prayers to GOD, to keep you stedfast and firm to your good purposes, and to bless your Endeavours with success.

And tho I can say little upon this Argument but what you have already heard, and know; yet I hope to be at least your *Remembrancer*, if not your *Instructor*, to put you in remembrance of these things, *tho you know them, and be establish'd in the present Truth.* 2 Pet. 1. 12.

In order to which I purpose to do Four Things.

First, To enquire what those particular Sins are, in suppressing of which we ought to be most *Zealously Affected*.

Secondly, To consider who are principally oblig'd, and concern'd to be *Zealously Affected*, against those dangerous Sins.

Thirdly, To point out some of those ways, wherein we may most usefully employ and shew our Zeal, so as to attain its excellent End. And

Fourthly, To offer such Motives, as may best excite and confirm

firm our *Zeal*, that *so we may be Zealously Affected* always in that *good thing* about which we ought to be engag'd.

I. I am to enquire what those particular Sins are in suppressing of which we ought to be most *Zealously Affected*.

It has already been observ'd in general, that promoting our known Duty, *undisputed Piety and Virtue*, is the best thing wherein we can be *Zealously Affected*. For these are the Essentials of Religion, without which no other privileges we can enjoy or boast of, will be of any advantage to us. Now this will be most happily effected, by suppressing those Vices and Impieties, which more directly dishonour GOD, and weaken Religion; and such undoubtedly are *Blasphemous Oaths and Curses, Profaning the Lords Day*, either by our Ordinary Labours, or Scandalous Diversions; together with the Brutal Vices of *Intemperance and Lewdness*.

Now we ought to be more *Zealously Affected* against these, than other Sins, because they are more destructive Enemies to Piety; there's more of Leprosie and Infection in them, and they are attended with more Fatal Consequences: Other Sins, I say, which being more private and unobserv'd, draw not such a Train of Mischiefs after them.

The first Sin then, against which *it is a good thing to be Zealously Affected*, is *Prophane Cursing and Swearing*.

That horrid Sin, which Dares Omnipotence, and Mocks avenging Justice, which affronts GOD out of Diversion, and Plays with his Thunder and Lightning. That Sin, which strikes at the Foundations of Religion, by involving Men in frequent Perjuries, and taking off all Reverence for an Oath. That Sin, which hurries daily many Souls to Hell, and is the fearful of Language of that place of *Impiety*, as well as *Torment*; and where the Damn'd at once *Gnaw their Tongues for Pain*, and *Blaspheme the GOD of Heaven*. That Sin I say, shou'd surely stir up the *Indignation and Zeal* of all those who have any Honour, any Love for GOD or Religion to punish, to destroy it; so effectually to suppress it, that it never may again Triumph in our Streets.

The misplac'd Devotion of the *Athenians*, inflam'd *St. Paul's Zeal*: He was fill'd with various Passions of Anger, of Pity, and

and of Grief, *to see the City wholly given to Idolatry*; He Argued, he Contended with their greatest Philosophers, and even hazard-
ed his Life to Convert them.

And shou'd not our Spirits be moved within us, to hear the Venerable Name of the True GOD, Impiously Prophan'd, and Ridiculouſly Invok'd; and that not by Ignorant Heathens, but Pretended Christians? by those who while they usurp that Sacred Title. *Are not only far from GOD in their Hearts, but with their very Lips Dishonour him?*

It must needs therefore be a good thing to be Zealously Affected, against this prevailing Sin; to Vindicate GOD's Honour, and bring those who Prophan his Name to Punishment.

A Second Sin against which, *it is a good thing to be Zealously Affected, is the Violation of the Lords-Day*, that Day which is Dedicated to the Worship and Service of GOD.

The Prophanation of the Lords-Day, has so fatal an influence on Religion, and tends so naturally to deface it, that they who are *Zealously Affected* for the one, must have a tender regard for the other. For the concerns of this World, do so steal upon Mens Minds, so charm and bewitch them, that did not the constant returns of the Lords-Day relax their Thoughts, and call them off from Business and Diversion, to Religion and Devotion; not only the *Power* but *form of Godliness* wou'd be lost, not only the thing it self, but very Name of *Religion* wou'd be Banish'd the World.

Whereas the Religious Observation of the Lords-Day, does often awaken those good thoughts, which all the Week have lay'n Buried under Cares and Pleasures. And many who at first go to Church out of Decency and Custom, will at length go out of Religion and Devotion. And indeed our joyning in Devout Prayers, and Heavenly Praises, hearing the Holy Scriptures Read, and our Duty affectionately recommended; all these preserve Spiritual Life, keep Conscience sensible and tender.

And the more strictly the Lords-Day is kept, the better will it answer the end of its Institution, the more effectually promote Piety, and secure Religion, whereas if only a part of it be allow'd

to the Worship of GOD, and the rest taken up in Sports and Diversions, it is to be fear'd, that our Morning Thoughts will soon pass away; and that the Evening Pastimes will deface all the good Impressions of the Day.

Now shall we not do excellent Service to *Religion*, by rescuing the Lords-Day from Scandalous Abuses, and hindring those Practices which must if not prevented, destroy it? The Honour of GOD is inseparably united to that of his Day. And Religion must languish and decay, when that Day is Neglected or Prophan'd: Publick Worship must be disus'd, and Private fall of Consequence. Of this our Governours are sensible, and therefore good Laws have been Enacted to hinder it; which are but a dead letter unless vigorously Executed. This surely then deserves and calls for our most active *Zeal*, to put the Laws in Execution against the *Prophaners* of the Lords-Day, since the preservation or ruin of Religion, does in a great measure depend upon it.

Thirdly, They who are *Zealously Affected against Sin*, must labour to suppress Lewdness and Uncleaness, and make those Wretched Creatures feel the just Severity of the Laws, who set up Factories for Wickedness, and make Prostitution their Trade.

Christianity is an *Undefil'd Religion*, and the *Wis-* Ja. 1. 26.
dom from above is pure or chaste; it prohibits all *Las-* 3. 17.
civious Practices, and lays restraints on our Thoughts. ayvii.

And is it possible there shou'd be any Country where this Holy Religion is Publickly Profess'd, and Divine Laws enforc'd by Temporal Punishments; where there are Christian Ministers to persuade, and Christian Mgisstrates to correct Offenders: In which notwithstanding Lewdness and Debauchery should be so much, so long wink'd at, as almost to plead Prescription, and Toleration? That there shou'd be Seminaries for Uncleaness, and yet unpunished, unregarded?

Thus it has been heretofore among us, and these Vices are still not only too commonly committed, but glory'd in, to the great Dishonour of GOD, and Reproach of Religion. That then must be an excellent *Zeal* which dares check and oppose these

these abominable Sins; which inspires us with Courage to Rescue our Christianity from Contempt, by bringing the Scandals of it to just Punishment and Shame, without being mov'd at their Insolence, or afraid of their Revenge.

There are many other very common, very dangerous Sins, against which *it is good thing to be Zealously Affected*, particularly *Common Drunkenness*, and *Excessive Gaming*. For these are not only great Sins in themselves, but often the unhappy causes of those I have already nam'd. Gaming inflames the Passions, fills the Mouth with Curses, and the whole Man with Rage. Drunkenness divests Men of their Reason, and puts every irregular desire into a Ferment; and then no wonder if Blasphemies be their Language, and Fleishly Lusts prevail against them. And very often Religion is neglected on the Lords-Day, for the sake of *Drinking* or *Gaming*, and wasted away in those mean, unprofitable Entertainments.

But since our Laws more directly take Cognizance of those other Sins, I wou'd to GOD that our Zeal were successful in entirely suppressing *them*. For they are the most pernicious Scandals to Religion, and shou'd therefore be the more immediate Objects of our Zeal. And were no Swearing heard among us, were the Lords-Day employ'd in Exercises of Religion and Devotion, and were all known Traders in in Lewdness driven away; what a Holy, what a Happy People wou'd we soon become? How Glorious wou'd Piety appear with all its Beauteous Charms? How wou'd Religion Prosper and Flourish? How wou'd Wickedness Blush and Tremble, and Fly away?

And this might soon be effected, did all heartily join in it, who are under particular Obligations so to do; which brings me in the Second place to consider who are principally oblig'd and concern'd *to be Zealously Affected* against those dangerous Sins.

'Tis certainly reason sufficient why we shou'd be *zealously affected* against publick Vices that we are Christians: Professors of that Religion which exacts the highest degrees of Holiness from our selves, and requires us to be *Zealous* and *Industrious* in reclaiming others from their evil ways, and in promoting Religion and *Reformation of Manners* in the World.

But

But sometimes particular Obligations arising from our Stations and Circumstances here, are superadded to those which Christianity lays upon us, which must be various as our Capacities and Conditions are. I shall therefore mention several ranks of Men, who are principally concern'd in this Great Work, and are bound with more than ordinary Diligence and Zeal to apply themselves to it.

The First I shall name are the *Ministers of Religion*, those who are Dedicated to the immediate Service of GOD, to Preach his Word, Administer his Sacraments, and attend at his Altar.

And certainly we who are *Embassadors from Christ for this very end and purpose, to beseech Sinners to be reconcil'd to GOD*, to whose Service we are solemnly set apart by the *imposition of Hands and Prayer*; we who are *Messengers, Watch-Men, and Stewards of the LORD*, Titles of great Dignity and Honour, and expressive of constant Diligence and Labour; we I say, shou'd oppose Vice, with a very active Zeal, and with unweari'd application; shou'd encourage all proposals for *Reformation of Manners*, and lead the way to others, in putting them in Execution. Shou'd like GOD's Ministers in Heaven *be a Flame of Fire* burning with Zeal so refin'd and pure, that like theirs it may never fail; so strong and vigorous, as may spare indeed the Sinners, but entirely destroy their Vices.

The Reformation of Mens Manners, in order to the Salvation of their Souls, is the end of our Preaching, and all our Labours; and shou'd we not animate those good Men who have avow'dly enter'd the Lists against Wickedness, since we have reason to hope that thereby our Work will become more easie and delightful, and that more encouraging successes will attend our Ministry, the most difficult obstructions (such publick Vices are) being happily remov'd? Nay shou'd we not bless GOD for exciting a Spirit of Piety and Religious Zeal amongst us; that there are any in this degenerate World, who have a true concern for Religion and Virtue? And don't all such deserve our Countenance and Encouragement, our greatest esteem and tenderest affection? And shou'd we not chearfully partake in all their Difficulties

culties and Dangers, as we hope to share in their Rewards and Glory.

'Tis usual to complain of the Corruptions of the Age, but complaints hardly ever work a Cure. Our discourses may be passionate against prevailing Sins, and yet those Sins continue to prevail, the most Guilty being seldom our Hearers, and when they are, not regarding what we say. It is fit then, it is necessary, that we use Arguments of another Nature, and punish those who are proof against all Persuasions, that with Stripes and Blows we make those *Deaf Adders* move, *who stop their Ears against the Voice of the wisest Charmer*; make those feel the coercive power of Humane Laws, who impiously violate the Laws of GOD.

We call our selves Successors of the Apostles and Prophets, and such undoubtedly all Lawful Ministers are: And shou'd not that one consideration inspire us with their Diligence, their Courage and their Zeal? That so we may oppose Prophaneness as *Elijah* did Idolatry, and with the resolution of *St. Paul* Reason of *Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment* to come?

But shou'd there be any so Complaisant for Wickedness, so Cowardly and Mean, as to be afraid or asham'd to disturb it in its antient Possessions; must they not Blush when *Surrounded with a Cloud of Witnesses* of their own Order, of Apostles, and Bishops and Pastors, who were not only *Preachers of Righteousness*, but *Reformers of Manners*? Who did not think they had discharged their Duty, by saying some handsome things against Vice; but being acted by a Holy Zeal, were particular and warm in Advices, vehement in their Expostulations, and bold in their Reproofs? While Men were wicked they pity'd them, they pray'd for them, but never made them their Intimates and Companions. They treated them as their Patients, whose recovery they heartily endeavoured, but never by Flattery and Compliance encreas'd their Distemper.

I hope in GOD there are few or none among us guilty of these Faults, so disagreeable to their Character, and prejudicial to Religion; the contrary I think is apparent, that those who are most remarkable

remarkable for their Piety, and eminent for their Stations in the Church, do further and encourage all prudent designs for suppressing Vice, and restoring Piety to its just Glory. But if there shou'd be any who have so far degenerated from the Zeal of their Primitive Predecessors, as to be negligent and remiss in this important Concern (and if some shou'd be so, among so many, 'tis not at all to be wondred at, nor any reasonable Objection against our Church) for such this Address is intended, and that sufficiently justifies the plainness of it, since sure I am they need it.

Secondly, Next to the *Ministers of Religion*, the greatest Obligations of being *Zealously Affected* against publick reigning Vices lye upon *Magistrates*, upon those who are invest'd with Authority and Power.

And that it is the Duty of Magistrates with great Courage and Impartiality, to suppress and punish all Wicked Practices. is plain from several Intimations of it in Holy Scripture. As that *Rulers are not a Terror to Good Works but to the Evil*. And if we do that which is Good, we need not be afraid of the Power, but shall have praise of the same: That he is the Minister of GOD for good, and beareth not the Sword in vain, and is a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil. Rom. 13. 3, 4. Again, we are commanded to be *subject to Governours* who are appointed for the punishment of Evil Doers, and the praise of them that do well. 1 Pet. 2. 14.

From all which it appears what sort of Persons Magistrates shou'd be; to evil works they shou'd be still a *Terror*, and the Sword of Justice they shou'd never bear in vain. Upon them that do Evil 'tis their Duty to execute Wrath; but good Works they are to Encourage, good Men they are to Support and Praise. 'Tis for this end that they have Power given them over others, by him from whom they originally derive their Commissions, *all Power being Ordained by him, for by him Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice*, and therefore his Service they shou'd constantly perform, and study the Vindication and Promotion of his Honour.

Besides

Besides, the Suppression of Wickedness and Vice is one great End of all Magistracy and Government, because thereby that which is its sole end *the publick Peace and Safety*, is effectually attain'd and secur'd. For it is inconsistent with the Publick Safety, to suffer Wickedness to go on unrestrained, Wickedness, I say, which has a natural tendency to Confusion and Disorder, endangers the Peace, and destroys the happiness of Society. For the Natural Consequence of this must be, the entire Ruine of Religion; and when that is gone, and Men are under no Tyes of Conscience, have no regard for GOD, believe not his Providence, and are under no apprehensions of his just Indignation, what Villanies then must be every where committed? What Feuds must continually arise betwixt Governours and Subjects, the one being Tyrannical, and the other Rebellious? What security can Men have for their Lives or Fortunes, when Perjury shall be no longer dreaded as a Crime? What an Emblem of Hell must this World become, Criminals being too numerous, too big to be Corrected? when those who by their office are suppos'd to be Guardians of Virtue, by their Practice, will appear Patrons of Impiety. Nay the resemblance will hold, not only in the Worlds Wickedness and Confusion, but Misery too; since Vice Countenanc'd by the neglect of Magistrates, must needs exasperate the Wrath of Heaven, and bring down heavy Judgments on those Nations, where it is allow'd to thrive, where warm'd and nourish'd by Connivence.

But surely Magistrates cannot neglect the Execution of the Laws against Immorality and Prophaness, upon such easie Terms, as some of them (if we may judge by their Practice) imagine; since when they enter upon their Office, they are Sworn to Execute and Maintain those Laws *after their Wit and Power, with equal respect to Poor and Rich*; and therefore every wilful Omission of their Duty, is a Violation of a Solemn Oath, and adds a new Perjury to all their other Crimes. And what a sad account shall such Men have to make at the Day of Judgment? Must they not be rank'd with Judas, and such other Wretches, having betray'd that Religion, they were oblig'd to defend, and protected

protected those Vices, they were commanded, they were sworn to Suppress ?

And how happy wou'd it be both for them and us, did all our Magistrates consider and act agreeably to the great Trust repos'd in them ? Did they with united Counsels and Endeavours put a stop to Vice, and not commit those Crimes themselves, they were commanded to punish in others ? How wou'd all the Blessings of Heaven and Earth flow down upon us ? And what a happy change wou'd their Zeal and Courage soon produce ? Vice wou'd sneak and not dare to shew its Deform'd Face ; Men wou'd be asham'd of their Wickedness, and tremble for fear of a Discovery, but never dare to Glory in it ; and all their deeds of Darkness, wou'd retire and shun the Light.

And certainly a Faithful Magistrate is a Publick Blessing: He's the most useful Member of the Common-Wealth, the best Patriot of his Country, and to his Prince a most Valuable Subject. He deserves all the Honour the present Age can give, and while the Name of some shall *Rot*, Generations to come shall call him Blessed.

And Praised be GOD's Holy Name, such Magistrates are not wholly wanting among us, there are some *even in this City*, who upon all proper Occasions, express a generous Zeal against Lewdness, Immorality and Prophaness ; and have been glorious Instruments in restraining those Crimes, which were usually committed with a daring Impudence : Magistrates, who are Zealous for their Masters Honour, and protect and encourage those who are active and forward in his Service, whose actions are agreeable to the end for which they were appointed, *the Punishment of Evil-doers, and Praise of them that do well*. The Merit of such Excellent Men, challenges the most publick and grateful acknowledgments which the Friends of Piety can pay ; and next to the great GOD of Heaven, we shou'd be loudest in the Praises of these Ornaments of Magistracy, Supports of Virtue, and Zealous Promoters of Reformation. And I'm very confident they shall never want a more valuable benefit than *Commendations*, the sincere and constant Prayers of all good Men, for their temporal and

and eteranal Happinefs. And I trust that the same GOD, who has *begun a good work in them*, will continue, will improve, and bring it to perfection. That he will so animate and assist them, that they shall *never grow weary in well-doing*, nor think any thing a trouble wherein GOD and Religion are concern'd. And others will I hope be influenc'd by these Examples, to walk in their Steps, and immitate their Zeal: That so all our *Magistrates* may enjoy the invaluable satisfaction which doing good to the World does here afford; all may be intitl'd to a Glorious Reward in Heaven.

Whatever particular Obligations lye upon Magistrates, to be Zealously Affected against Prophane's and Vice, do likewise respect the *Nobility and Gentry*. 'Tis true, they are not all *Sworn* to Execute the Laws, yet Honours and Estates are conferr'd-upon them, by the Sovereign Proprietor of all things, that they may be qualifi'd thereby to be the more serviceable to the interests of Piety and Religion. These Gifts of Heaven are Talents for which they must render an account to the Great Donor of them: And if they improve them to his Glory, and the good of Mankind; If they will not decline expence nor trouble, to destroy Vice, and make Religion prosper; then they answer the intention of Providence, and shall be able *to give an account of their Stewardship with Joy*. They shall entail lasting Blessings upon their Families, and secure endless Glory to themselves. Nay they will silence the Clamours of Malice and Envy, since few won't rejoice at the greatness of those who make all their privileges subservient to Piety and Virtue.

A Third sort of Persons who are concern'd to be *Zealously Affected* against those dangerous Sins are *Penitents*: Those who having heretofore been engag'd in sinful Courses, are by the Grace of GOD delivered from their Bondage, and restor'd to a better Mind.

'Tis a common observation, that Penitents are more Zealous, than any others against Sin: And indeed ther's a Natural Reason why it shou'd be so; for the more Men know of Vice, when once throughly awaken'd from its Charms, they more they will
abhor

abhor and detest it. Besides, 'tis what they are strictly oblig'd to in Conscience: For having heretofore dishonour'd GOD, obstructed Religion, and made Men Enemies to Virtue: They are bound (if I may so speak) to make what Restitution they can to all those, for the Injuries they have done them.

Have they heretofore Prophan'd GOD's Name, or his Word, or his Day? Then surely if their Repentance be sincere, they will not only in the highest manner honour these themselves, but be very assiduous to procure them all possible Reverence from others. Have they entic'd others to Sin, and been but too unhappily successful in it? Shou'd not then their Zeal be constant and active as the Sun and Light, and bring Men to a sense of their Duty, that so they may be Instruments of saving more, than they have been the Fatal Means of destroying? Have they injur'd Religion by their Evil Examples? Then surely their Lives for the future, shou'd be bright and unspotted; their Actions Eminently Holy, and a most engaging Pattern of Piety, they shou'd set to the World. Had they almost miscarry'd and been ruin'd for ever by their Wickedness, had not the Goodness of GOD miraculously interpos'd for their Deliverance? Then 'tis certainly their Duty to caution others of those Rocks, whereon they had well nigh been Ship-rack'd.

Such was the Practice of those great Examples of sincere Repentance, Holy *David*, and *St. Paul*. After the former had in very passionate terms bewail'd his Sins, and implor'd the Pardon of GOD for them, as the natural consequence of his Repentance, he declares his Pious Resolution, *I will teach thy ways to the Wicked, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee.* Psal. 51. 13. And thus it was with *St. Paul* after his Conversion. Did he once make Havock of the Church? He afterwards labour'd more abundantly than all the Apostles to enlarge and strengthen it. Was he once a bitter Enemy to Christianity, a Blasphemer and Reviler of the Son of GOD? He afterwards prov'd a most Zealous Advocate for the one, a most Successful Preacher of the other. Did he hale the Saints to Prison, was he consenting to their Death? To the same Religion, they profess'd, he adher'd faithfully

unto Death, and for it was Crown'd with Martyrdom himself.

And thus shou'd all true Penitents behave themselves; whatever tends to the Advancement of Religion, with all the powers of their Souls they shou'd pursue themselves, and recommend to others, with a most *Industrious Zeal*. Then wou'd their *Repentance* be not only sincere, but compleat; available to their Pardon, and cause *Joy in the presence of the Angels*.

Fourthly and Lastly, They who have enter'd into *Societies for Reformation of Manners*, and thereby avow'dly engag'd in the service of Piety and Religion, are particularly oblig'd to be *Zealously Affected* against those foremention'd *Dangerous Sins*.

My Argument does not require that I shou'd undertake a just Vindication of such *Societies*, and prove the usefulness of them; this has been fully done by others, and the great service they daily do Religion, sufficiently proclaims it.

Yet we may in general observe, that *Vice* is too potent an Enemy to be defeated by any single endeavours; *Vice*, which too often baffles the united Labours of the best Men in the World, and is supported by a Confederacy of all the Powers of Darkness. Besides, we cannot but be sensible; that good Men have need of Companions, to animate them to a work of Difficulty and Danger. We are afraid to appear Champions for Religion, are afflicted with an evil shame, and easily discourag'd; *when alone*. But a competent number when join'd in a *Society* advise, support, and excite one another. The Prudent Calmness of some, restrains the Irregular Warmth of others; whose Vigorous *Zeal* on the other hand, like Fire, communicates Heat, and Life, and Spirit to the Negligent, and Indifferent; gives flame to their Affections, and enlivens their Souls. Again 'tis reasonable to believe that what the United Councils of many resolve upon, and what is Prosecuted by their joint Endeavours, will be more wisely undertaken, and more successfully accomplish'd, than if there were no such Union either in Council, or in Action. So that a great many good Men, who wou'd otherwise be of little use to Religion, do very much advance and promote it, by thus joining together

together their Hearts and Hands for that purpose; as those many little Stars which make up what we call the *Milky way in the Heavens*, wou'd if separated wholly disappear, but by their Conjunction afford, a very useful Light to the World.

We are all sufficiently convinc'd, of the necessity of Societies in many other cases, for carrying on any design of Importance. If a Prince is become too Potent for one Neighbour, whom he is likely to Devour, then many become *Confederates* to humble him. Is any great Trade to be undertaken, which is too difficult and expensive for any Private Fortune and Contrivance? Then is it usually accomplish'd by a *Society or Company*. Our Common Safety shews us the necessity of *Parliaments*, which are but great Societies for *Reforming* the Common Wealth, by redressing Grievances, and making Useful Laws. And is *Religion* the only thing that either does not need, or does not deserve a *Society* to promote and secure it? Is not suppressing Publick Impiety, Lewdness and Profaneness; bringing those who are openly Wicked and Proud of being so esteem'd, to Punishment; and removing from others the Pestilence of Evil Examples; are not all these Matters of great Weight and Moment; and which deserve the most serious Thoughts of the Prudent, as well as the Religious? And if these things can be better effected by *Societies* than any other way, does not that fully evince the *Usefulness*, or rather great *Necessity*, of them? If *Reformation of Manners* can be accomplish'd more successfully by other Methods, than these of *Societies*, it wou'd do great service to Religion, to discover them to the World, but since that has not yet been done, 'tis very reasonable that Persons of Piety and Zeal, shou'd go on in the way they know, till they be made acquainted with a better.

I own did every Man among us Conscientiously discharge his Duty in his Station, and according to his Capacity; were there no *Negligent Ministers*, nor any *Unfaithful Magistrates*, and did every other Person in his Private Capacity, do what in strictness he ought to do, then the whole Church wou'd be one great *Religious Society*, and that wou'd supersede the necessity of any other. But seeing that never was in any Age of the Church, not

in the most Primitive and Purest times: Seeing that *Ecclesiastical Discipline* is fallen so very low, that *Church Censures* are lost upon the greater part of Mankind: And seeing we have no prospect of any publick alteration for the better, but have cause to fear that every thing will become worse, unless the impending Mischief be in time prevented; seeing the case is so, I think it plainly follows, that those Men of Eminent Integrity and Virtue (how low soever some of their Fortunes may be) who without any prospect of *Worldly Advantage* (nay to their manifest loss) have resolv'd to encounter Difficulties and Dangers; and undergo Calumnies and Slanders; rather than Wickedness shall continue bare-fac'd, and Vice spread every where without opposition, any more: Those Men I say, deserve all Encouragement to themselves, and their design: The countenance and protection of our Governours, and all who wish well to Religion.

'Tis true, they have had no small share in *Censures* and *Objections*; But what Person so innocent, what Design so laudable as to escape them? If *Christianity* the best *Religion*, If the Blessed Jesus the Holiest Person that ever was, have been, and daily are Blaphem'd, Revil'd, and Slander'd: What are you, *my Brethren*, that you shou'd hope to be Exempted from the Common Fate of the best Men in the World? Has Satan entirely chang'd his Nature, and laid aside his Malice? Is he not only transform'd into the *likeness of an Angel of Light* but become really one? Will he no more oppose Religion, no more *obstruct Reformation of Manners*? Or has the *Old Serpent* lost at once his Cunning and his Poyson? Has he so often mis-represented Religion with great success, and expos'd it to publick Hatred, by Painting it as some frightful Monster? And won't he still prosecute the same Methods, which have hardly ever fail'd him, and endeavour to defeat the good Designs of some Men, by raising unaccountable Jealousies and Fears in others; and labour to undermine by secret Calumnies and Slanders, what he wants Power directly to oppose?

But yet if Two or Three sorts of Persons were silent, very few Mouths wou'd be open'd against *Societies for Reformation*. Those who take things upon Trust, and Condemn without knowing the

the Merits of the Cause, who have been impos'd upon for want of due enquiry, by false Representations both of the Design and Persons concern'd in it. Or those who being not truly *Zealous* themselves, are angry that any shou'd go beyond them, and thereby tacitly reproach their want of *Zeal*; or they lastly, who are enrag'd that their unlawful Liberties shou'd be check'd and restrain'd, that any shou'd presume to Curb their Lewdness and Prophaneity. But the Clamours of these kinds of Men are ill ground-ed and unjust; such as can be no surprize to any who are acquaint-ed with the Corruptions of Humane Nature, and consider the active indefatigable Malice of the Devil; and therefore can never shake a *prudent well establish'd Zeal*.

And such I trust in GOD *your Zeal* will always be, and that you will still find that Encouragement and Protection to which you are justly intitl'd, by the Excellency of your Undertaking, and Prudence of your Behaviour. I am perswaded you did not enter into these *Societies* rashly and unadvisedly; but weigh'd all the hardships and inconveniences you might reasonably expect on the one hand, and consider'd the motives which excited your *Zeal* on the other; and after mature deliberation *chose the good part*, and resolv'd with great Constancy to adhere to it; cheer-fully to bear Opposition, Contempt and Reproach, provided you might be able to put a stop to any one prevailing Sin.

But the same Christian *Zeal* which first mov'd you to *Associate* against Vice, will oblige you to continue and persevere, to be-come more Active and *Zealous* in suppressing it: To this, your Obligations are great, as Members of the Christian Church, in-to which when you were admitted, you vow'd to *continue Christs Faithful Servants and Soldiers to your Lives end*: But your belong-ing to a Society whose sole end is *Reformation of Manners*, has much increas'd them. A Design the best and noblest in the World, but which ought to be Prosecuted with a very constant, prudent *Zeal*; that the Enemies of Piety may not be able to in-sult, may have no occasion to upbraid any of you, either with Negligence or Imprudence. And then will you more successfully promote your Great, and Excellent End; and in due time stop the Mouths of *Gain-sayers*.

These

These are the several orders of Men who are particularly oblig'd to be *Zealously Affected* in suppressing Prophaness and Vice; not that any are exempted from it; it is the Business and Duty, and ought to be the Study and Practice of every Christian. Here all are Commanded, and may without a Crime, *put forth their Hands to support the Ark*. 'Tis true they cannot, they must not all attempt to do it the same way; what is the Indispensible Duty of one, may be a Great Sin in another to pretend to: And tho' all ought to shew their *Zeal* for Religion and Reformation, yet they must take different ways of shewing it; which leads me to the

Third Particular I propos'd to speak to, which was to point out those ways wherein we may best employ and shew our *Zeal*, so as to attain the Excellent Ends it aims at.

Something of this I have hinted at already, for by mentioning those several sorts of Men, who are oblig'd to higher degrees of *Zeal* against Vice than others, I did in effect shew how their *Zeal* is to express it self.

Thus for Example: Are we *Zealous Ministers* of Religion? Then must our *Zeal* appear both to GOD and Man in our Publick Preaching and Exemplary Life; and in our Private Labours and Endeavours to infuse *Piety* and *Zeal* into others. We must shew our *Zeal* by leading the way to others in the best manner, Prudence directs, and so far as our Duty requires. And lastly our *Zeal* must express it self in Constant and Fervent Prayers to GOD, for his Blessing and Assistance.

Again, are we *Zealously Magistrates*? Then are we to employ our *Zeal* in Vigorously Executing the Laws against Immorality and Prophaness. We are to Countenance and Encourage all who are engag'd in the Service of *Religion and Reformation*, and secure them from the rude insults of those who have made themselves their Enemies: And to influence others to Honour *Religion* by the Brightness of our own Examples.

As for those of Inferiour Degree, whose Station is Private, and whose Condition is Obscure, even they may many ways testify the sincerity of their *Zeal*, and make it very serviceable to

Piety

Piety and Virtue. The meanest Man among us has a Family to take care of, and *that* he may preserve from the Infection of Reigning Sins : He can Admonish, can Reprove, and Correct his Child or his Servant, with Authority and good Effect. He may also Exhort, and Advise his Neighbour of his own Rank, nay he may Reprove him too, upon a Just Occasion, and in a Prudent Manner ; and thereby contribute much to reclaim him. Such a Man may especially be very useful to Religion, by bringing the open Enemies of it, to deserved Punishment. He will unavoidably be often a Witness of Publick Sins. He will frequently see the Lords-Day Prophan'd, and hear GOD's Holy Name Dishonour'd and Blasphemed ; and that by those who are too Great to be Reprov'd by him, and who wou'd answer all his Grave Advices with Scorn and Rage. But then that Man ought, if he has any *Zeal* for the Honour of GOD, to Inform the Magistrates of what he has Seen and Heard, and shew his own *Zeal*, by giving them an opportunity of exercising *theirs*. He ought without any *by-regards* to Interest or Friendship, to acquaint those *who bear the Sword*, with the Crimes that have been committed before him, that the Guilty may feel, how *they bear it not in vain*.

This is what many among us have of late done with very great success; and therefore what I cannot but recommend to all, as the most effectual means of entirely rooting out all gross Immoralities and publick Vices, especially those more heinous ones I have so often nam'd. And since it has pleas'd GOD, to give us some *good Magistrates*, who want neither *Zeal* nor *Courage* to put the Laws in Execution, what remains to accomplish a through *Reformation of Manners*, but that we contribute our Endeavours to it, by giving constant and Impartial *Informations* against Offenders.

It is true, an *Informer* has been generally esteem'd a Name of Infamy and Reproach, and in many cases not without reason. It is an Employment has been sometimes taken up by Men of Blasted Repurations, upon the basest motives, and manag'd in the most disingenuous manner. When we saw a Man accuse others of a Crime

Crime whereof he was himself more Guilty, and that not out of remorse of Conscience or *Zeal* to have Criminals Punish'd, but in hopes of Favour and Money from those in Power. When we saw Informing made a Trade, and Men getting Bread by *Perjury*, mixing much Falshood, with a little Truth. When we saw all the Laws of Hospitality and Friendship violated, and things spoken with Freedom and without Design, told with Aggravations to a jealous Government. When I say, Informing was such an Employment as this, no wonder, if it was Scandalous to be concern'd in it.

But the *Informing* I am recommending is of another nature, it is not to catch at an unwary expression which Malice may wrest to an ill meaning, or when spoken under the Seal of Friendship. But it is, *acquainting* our *Governours* and *Magistrates* with those Blasphemies, and Oaths, which are often vented in Publick, and those other Instances of Lewdness and Immorality, which are *overt-acts* of Treason and Rebellion, against GOD. In such cases it is our Duty, and we shou'd reckon it our *Glory* to be *Informers*, since GOD himself at the Last Day will encrease our *Honour*, for being thus Instrumental in Vindicating *His*.

'Tis true, the Enemies of *Religion* have been, and still are very loud in their Clamours against this Practice, and do with great Industry throw an Odium on those who make Conscience of *Informing against them*. But they have especially rais'd a mighty cry of Injustice, against that *manner of Informing*, which is found necessary to restrain *Prophane Cursing and Swearing*, that is, when the Guilty Person knows not his Accuser. I shall therefore at present endeavour to Vindicate both these, and shew that to *Inform* against Vice is every Mans Duty, and that *Private Informations* are not only Just and Reasonable, but of absolute Necessity. And this I hope will be judg'd no digression, since it tends to confirm us in one of the most useful, and necessary Expressions of our *Zeal*.

I begin with the *First* of these, which is to shew that we are strictly oblig'd in point of Duty, to *Inform against Propbans and Vice*.

This will appear if we consider

First, The Commands and Examples which in Holy Scripture require it.

Secondly, If we consider the reasonableness and necessity of the thing.

First, Let us consider the Commands and Examples which in Holy Scripture require it.

And can any Command be more positive, express and clear, that what we find in the 13th of Deut. from the 5th to the 12th verse?

If thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or thy Son or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Bosom, or thy Friend, which is even as thy own Soul, entice thee secretly saying, let us go and serve others gods, (which thou hast not known, thou nor thy Father.)

Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine Eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, neither shalt thou conceal him.

But thou shalt surely kill him, thine Hand shall be first upon him, to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People.

And all Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such Wickedness as this is among you.

From which words it is plain, that to *Inform* against dangerous Infectious Sins, such as have a tendency to destroy Religion, and the Worship of GOD, is so in dispensable a Duty, that no consideration of *Blood* or *Friendship* can excuse us from it :. Our Duty to GOD Cancels all Obligations to Men ; and nothing must be allow'd any competition in his Love. Those who lye nearest our Hearts, our Brothers, and Wives, and Children, and our best Friends must be torn thence, when GOD and our Duty call; when *His* Service requires it, who is our most Indulgent Father, our Truest Friend, and our most Generous Benefactor.

But *Idolatry* was not the only Sin the *Israelites* thought themselves oblig'd to suppress by *Informing* against it? *Cursing* and *Blasphemy*, were to undergo the same just severity. As appears from the instance of the *Israelitish Womans Son*, Lev. 24. 11, 12, 14. *Who Blasphemed GOD and Cursed.* Those who heard him, were not troubl'd with that nice Honour, some now a days pretend to, and

thought it no reflection upon them, to acquaint *Moses and Aaron* with his Crime, tho nothing less than his Death was the consequence of their *Information*. The Witnesses were Commanded to lay their Hands upon his Head, and all the Congregation to Stone him with Stones till he Dy'd. And yet tho the Forfeiture of a small Sum of Money, be all the Penalty inflicted among us, for the Prophanest Oaths and Curses, how few are there who have Zeal and Courage to exact even *that!* who do not let that Sin be often committed in their presence, and yet are afraid or ashamed, so much as to reprove it!

Nor was the *Sabbath-Breaker* treated more gently than the *Blasphemer*, by the People of *Israel*. They who found the Man gathering Sticks upon the Sabbath-Day, immediately brought him to *Moses and Aaron, and all the Congregation, and he was Stoned with Stones till he Dy'd*. Numb 15. 32. Had these Men liv'd among us, how wou'd they have been Hated and Derided as Officious Informers, who meddl'd in things, that did not at all belong to them! But they were convinc'd that no Man ought to stand Neuter when the Laws of GOD are publicly Violated; and that the cause of Religion every own shou'd esteem his own, and espouse and promote it with the same Warmth and Resentment.

But that it is our Duty to *Inform against Prophaness and Vice*, will farther appear if we consider

Secondly, The reasonableness and necessity of the thing.

For is it not reasonable that Wickedness shou'd be Suppress'd, and that Open Impieties shou'd be Punish'd and Corrected? But this cannot be done, if it be Infamous to Inform against them; if the thing it self be necessary, the means that lead to it, must be necessary too; and the most effectual are, *Constant Informations* to the Magistrate. Without this our Laws against Vice have been made to little purpose; and our Magistrates can but lamely Execute that part of their Charge, of being a Terror to Evil-Doers. Therefore to make these *Informations* Dishonourable, and to throw Contempt upon those who are most active in them, is one of the Devils Arts to obstruct Piety, and *Reformation of Manners*, and whereby he supplants Religion; which as matters now stand, cannot be well secur'd without them.

But

But the reasonableness and necessity of this Duty will be more evident, if we consider that all Men allow it in other Cases, and that the two great Fundamental Virtues of Religion, *Justice* and *Charity* require it.

I. All Men allow it in other Cases.

Those Offences which are more directly committed against Men, 'tis allowable, 'tis Honourable to discover: If we know a Man Guilty of Murder, or Robbery, or Treason, none ever thought it severe to Inform against him; nay, shou'd we conceal him, we might justly be esteem'd Parties in his Crime. And is not the Case and Duty the same, and shou'd not the Honour be so too, with respect to those Sins which are immediately levell'd against GOD? It is commendable to Inform against a *Thief*, 'tis strange it shou'd be otherwise to bring a *Blasphemer* or a *Prostitute* to Punishment; unless it be a much smaller Crime to affront GOD to his Face, without the least Motive or Temptation, than to meddle with our Neighbours Goods.

How differently are Men Affected, when sensibly touch'd in point of Worldly Interest, and when only influenc'd by the considerations of their Duty to GOD! When wrong'd in their Fortunes, they allow no limits to their Passions, but are all Indignation and Resentment. Not all their Wit and Malice, can find out Words sufficiently expressive of their Anger, their Hatred, and their Grief. Each Circumstance they aggravate, yet pretend that the Injurie is greater than they can represent it, they are big with Fury, and travel with Revenge.

And yet often the very same Persons can be unconcern'd Spectators, of the most Heinous Sins against GOD. Can hear his *Being* Deny'd, and every *Attribute* Contemned, without any sensible Emotions within, or any Attempts to Vindicate their *Maker*.

This is but too evident even in our Publick Laws, the Penalties of Crimes being not at all proportion'd to their being more or less hateful to GOD, but the Mischiefs we imagine they occasion to Men. Thus to Steal is an Odious Sin, and the Wretch that is Guilty of it, must Dye. When *Blasphemy* and *Perjury* shall escape.

escape. And he who discovers a *Thief* shall be as sure of Glory, as he who *Inform*s against a *Blasphemer* shall be of Contempt and Hatred.

But even in this particular, Men are generally mistaken, those Sins being always in the end most destructive to their Worldly Interests, which are most Odious to GOD: This none can question who believe a particular Providence, and that GOD is concern'd in the Government of the World: But will be more apparent when we consider

Secondly, That the Two great Duties of *Justice* and *Charity* require this Practice of *Informing* against *Prophaness* and *Vice*.

I. Justice requires it. Justice to our Country, and to the Common-Wealth whereof we are Members, we are oblig'd to it by the Laws of Society.

All allow that we are unjust to our Country, if we do not oppose whatever may bring Calamities upon it, don't promote its Interest, and labour to prevent its Ruin. Now this cannot be better done than by *Informing* against Vice and Prophaness, and all Publick Wickedness, and thereby putting a stop to those Courses, which if unrestrained, will make GOD our Enemy, and bring down General Judgments upon us.

'Tis true, when GOD Visits a Nation with *Sword*, with *Pestilence*, or *Famine*, he regards no doubt Private, as well as Publick Sins, and our most Secret Crimes add Fuel to the Common Flame: But yet General National Judgments, are certainly the Effects of General National Sins, of Publick uncontroul'd Wickedness. And when Societies or Nations are Punish'd, it is for those Sins which Societies or Nations (consider'd as such) have committed. Particular Private Sins committed under the Shades of Night and Security of Retirement, 'tis reasonable to believe shall only prove Fatal to the Offenders themselves, but occasion no Publick Judgment, draw down no Calamity upon the Society in general; and the reason is, because no Nation, no Society can prevent these Secret Sins. They are beyond the reach of the severest Laws, and exactest Justice; no Eye sees them but that of Heaven, and therefore the Society is not accountable for them.

But

But then a National Judgment may be justly fear'd, when Vice grows Bold and Publick; when it invades the Seats of Authority and Command; and the Laws against it are laid asleep. When like Serpents, Warm'd by the Influence of the Sun above them, it leaves its dark retreats and creeps abroad, filling every place with confus'd Hisles, and scattering its Poyson round about. Then is GOD's Honour concern'd to Punish such wicked Nations, they are Ripe for Ruin, and Storms and Thunder are hovering about their Heads.

But if we are just to our Country, and true to its Interest, we will not share in the Guilt of Publick Wickedness, by neglecting it; but do our part to have it check'd in time, before it has gather'd great Strength, and lost all Modesty; is become too Impudent to be alham'd, too Strong to be resisted. *Magistrates* alone are not able to do all this, the most *Zealous* among them, can of themselves take Cognizance but of few Crimes; few daring to be *Prophane before them*, unless encourag'd by their Connivance or invited by their Example. And therefore if we wou'd effectually discharge our Duty to our Country, we must make Conscience of *Informing* against Vice, now especially when we have *Magistrates*, who make Conscience of punishing it; Then we, might hope to see our Country Prosper, and the Sun daily Shining and Smiling upon us. And tho some might be still secretly Wicked, yet they durst not be openly so, in defiance of *Religion* and the *Laws*. To be Lewd and Prophane, wou'd no more be Gentile Accomplishments; Impiety wou'd no longer dare to appear at Noon-Day, but like a Ghost, wou'd Flye the Light, and retire to its Native Darknes.

But to *Inform against Prophaness and Vice*, is *Secondly* a Duty of *Charity* as well as of *Justice*.

First, It is great Charity to the *Poor*, who are thereby considerably releiv'd; and this is *Charity* and *Prudence* both, making Mens Vices do *that*, which out of Conscience they never did, Contribute towards the Maintenance of the Needy. This is to extract the greatest Good, out of the greatest Evil; an Antidore from Poyson.

Again

Again 'tis *Charity* even to those who are *Punish'd*. For Admonitions and Advices, are commonly lost upon a hardened *Swearer*; they inflame his Passions, and make him renew his Sin; But when he finds that his Oaths begin to be Expensive to him, without any Compensation of Pleasure or Profit, by *that* he will probably be awakn'd to see the folly of them, and totally at last forbear them. When a Man has suffer'd pretty often for *Prophaning the Lords-Day*, he will at last leave it off, and contract an Habitual Reverence for *It*. Now 'tis *Charity* to break a Man of those Practices, which if, persever'd in, will ruin him for ever, let the Methods of doing it be never so disobliging. 'Tis *Charity* to Cure a Mad-Man of his Frenzy, even by Chains and Scourges, tho in the mean time he hates nothing so much as his *Physician*.

Lastly, 'Tis great *Charity* to the Youth of this present Age, and to the succeeding Generations also. To the Youth of this present Age, whose Minds are yet tender and uncorrupted, 'tis great *Charity* to remove from them the Contagious Poyson of *Vice* and *Prophaness*. For it is the Wickedness of the Aged that corrupts our Youth, and the Example of the one, has a Fatal Influence upon the other. But we wou'd need little pains to make those who are Young Honour *GOD's Name*, if we cou'd so effectually suppress *Swearing*, that those who are Old durst not be their Patterns in that Sin. And our Youth wou'd of themselves Reverence the *Lords-Day*, were the Laws so well Executed that others durst not Prophane it. But this never can be done, unless we all think it our Duty to *Inform* against the Prophane and Vicious; and unless *Magistrates* Encourage such *Informations*.

Then for the *Succeeding Generations*, it is *Charity* to them to put a stop to Wickedness, and hinder it from descending upon them; for wou'd it not be better for them never to be Born, than to come into a World so Corrupted, that it wou'd be miraculous to escape Infection; than to be Born to Sin here, and Misery hereafter. But if we have any *Charity* for those who are to succeed us, we will be very *Zealous* in suppressing all sorts of *Wickedness* now, and give continual *Informations* against those who dare be publicly Guilty of *it*, and so we shall entail upon our
Posterity;

Posterity, with our Fortunes, a more valuable Inheritance, Piety and Virtue, and all the Blessings of Heaven.

Upon the whole. To *Inform* against Prophaneſs and Vice, is what GOD's Law does poſitively enjoin and require. And it is recommended to us by ſome Excellent Examples recorded in *Scripture*. It is highly reaſonable and neceſſary, all Men eſteem it ſo in other Parallel Caſes : Our Duty to our *Country*, *Charity to the Poor*, and to the Offenders themſelves ; to the Youth of this preſent Age, and to the Generations which are yet for to come, do all oblige us to it. And ſurely theſe conſiderations are ſufficient to Vindicate this Practice, and recommend it too to Chriſtians, thoſe eſpecially who are *Zealouſly Affected in good things*, let thoſe who want *Zeal* or *Courage* to undertake it, or who have been corrected by it, revile and cenſure it as they pleaſe.

I therefore hope that you will go on in the way wherein you have hitherto walked, and perſevere in a Duty ſo pleaſing to GOD, ſo reaſonable and neceſſary, and which Juſtice and Charity both require. And will not be Frightn'd by the loudeſt Clamours, the unjuſteſt Reflections, or moſt Malicious Accuſations of your Enemies. For if your *Informations* be diſintereſted and impartial, without reſpect of Perſons, or regard to temporal Advantage. If they gratifie no Paſſion, but *Religious Zeal*, (and ſuch I believe yours have been, and ſuch I hope they will always be) then ſure I am, good Men will Love and Praise, GOD will Reward you for them.

I now proceed in the *Second place*, To juſtify *Private Informations*, which are found abſolutely neceſſary to reſtrain Common Swearing, *ſo that they who are Punish'd ſhall not know who Inform'd againſt them.*

Were we to paſs Judgment upon this Practice only by the violent Out-cries of many againſt it, we cou'd not but condemn it as the greateſt Injuſtice and Cruelty in the World. The Multitude of the Jews did not cry more loudly againſt our Saviour, *Cruciſie him, Cruciſie him.* And it is to be fear'd that ſome among us, like *Pilate*, are born down by Tumult and popular Noiſe, to paſs Sentence contrary to the Dictates of their own Minds : To

Condemn

Condemn the Innocent, and Release the Guilty. But Innocence is what all pretend to, and the most Prophane will seldom plead Guilty. *It is these Private Informers, say they, who have a load of Guilt to answer for ; their Informations being justly charg'd with Malice and Falshood, and the Magistrates who countenance them with Avarice and Oppression.* And must we not allow it to be wondrous hard, that any restraints shou'd be lay'd upon a Blaspheming Tongue! That Men cannot use at pleasure, the privilege of Speech, which Nature has given them! Cannot publickly Affront GOD, and imprecate Damnation to all about them, so many Sawcy Informers lurking every where! Is it not harder still that they shou'd not know who *these Invaders of their Unchristian Liberty* are; who by being thus conceal'd from their knowledge, are secur'd from their Revenge, and so they cannot make them feel the Effects of their Indignation and Resentment!

But our Magistrates it seems are of another Mind, and see no unreasonable Severity in this method of proceeding. And indeed the Sin of *Common Swearing* must be so hateful to all good Men, that to suppress it they cannot judge any thing severe, if but agreeable even to *Rigorous Justice*. But *Private Informations* against Swearers, are very just, and highly expedient and necessary: they very much promote the end of the Law, yet are *Injurious* to none; nay even they who are most frequently punish'd by them, have no good reason to desire that the practice shou'd be otherwise. All which I shall now endeavour to prove.

First, I am to shew that Private Informations against Common Swearers are just.

Now that Practice is just, whereby the end of an Excellent Law is very much promoted, yet none at all injur'd nor wrong'd. And such is the Practice of *Private Informations*. For is the Person against whom the *Information* is given, Guilty of the Crime, with which he is charg'd? Then where is the wrong, if he be Discover'd and Punish'd for it? Justice requires that he shou'd not escape, and whither the *Information* be Publick or Private, provided it be true, he has no hardship to complain of: He has Committed a very Heinous Sin; and is he wrong'd, because he suffers

suffers the Penalty of the Law? And indeed it is notorious that they who are loudest in their Complaints against *Private Informations*, are the most Criminal, they who are oftenest and always justly punish'd. The true cause of their Anger, is the Penalty they suffer, the manner of the *Information* only a pretence. Let them Swear on and take no notice of their Oaths, and they will be very modest in their Censures, of *Private Informations*.

I suppose then it will be granted that *Private Informations* are just, if they are true. That which makes an *Information* unjust, is the falshood of it. And whither *Informations* shoud be Publick or *Private*, is rather a Consideration of *Expediency* than *Justice*. There are some Cases in which *Private Informations* ought not to be allow'd, there are others in which they are highly necessary. The reason why in most Cases *Informations* ought to be Publick, is to prevent and discourage *Perjury* and *Revenge*. For if all *Informations* were to be *Private*, and the *Informers* never known nor punish'd (when they deserv'd it) then no Man cou'd be secure either of his Fortune or his Life. But if none of these ill Consequences can attend *Private Informations* against Swearing, if they are no Encouragement to *Wilful Perjury*, and at the same time are highly necessary to suppress that *Sin*, which is the *Original Cause* of most *Perjuries*, taking off all Reverence for GOD, and an Oath; if the Case be so, then I think such *Private Informations* are very free from Injustice.

Now to be Convinc'd of this, I wou'd have you consider, that whoever knowingly *Perjures himself* to Injure another, must be suppos'd to do it, either to procure some *Temporal Advantage*, or to prevent some great *Evil*, or to gratifie his Passion of *Revenge*. It argues the most Uncharitable Savage Temper; to believe that any Man will go deliberately about the Sin of *Perjury*, without any *Motive*, *Inducement*, or *Temptation*. That he will at the same time dishonour GOD, wrong his Neighbour, and contract the Guilt of a very Heinous Sin himself, and yet gratifie no Passion by it, neither excite any hope of Reward, nor remove any fear of Punishment, nor calm any Violent Resentment. And yet this is really the case, with respect to *Private Informations* against Swearing.

Swearing. The Informers are to have no share, in what the *Swearers* are forc'd to pay. Nor are the Magistrates further concern'd, than to Execute the Law. The Money is wholly for the use of the Poor. Nor can the Poor be wrong'd, of what they are thus Initi'd to, unless there be a Confederacy of the Informers and Magistrates, of the Ministers, Church-Wardens, and Over-seers of the Poor to do it. And as none are tempted by Rewards to Perjure themselves, neither are they mov'd by Fear. They suffer no Penalty if they do not Inform; none will be angry if they forbear, but they will be sure of Hatred if they do. 'Tis true, there is one sort of Fear has some influence upon them. And that is the Fear of the Great GOD of Heaven. They are under too great an Awe of that Infinite Being, not to bring those to Punishment who dare Prophane his Name. Then as to Revenge that can never be a motive with our Informers, to be Guilty of Perjury; having no Personal acquaintance with most of those, against whom they do Inform, and having never receiv'd the least Injury from them.

Some I know will be apt to say, that many even *True Informations* proceed from Malice and Resentment, from Quarrels and a Revengeful Spirit. And certainly of all Men, *Common Swearers* have most reason to believe, that they will meet with the Effects of other Mens Displeasure, since they must be Conscious to themselves, that by their Rage and Passion they have often not only affronted GOD, but provok'd their Neighbour: And no Man will pity them, if this be sometimes their own case; nor can that be Condemn'd as Revenge, which goes no farther than the Execution of a just and reasonable Law. But there is no great ground among us, for this Uncharitable Observation, the most *Diligent Informers* being free from Revenge, and who with the Guilty Persons no greater harm, than Repentance and Reformation. Yet suppose it shou'd be so, that Malice or Revenge were at the Bottom of some Informations; of such every good Man will say (with St. Paul in another case) so Swearing be suppress'd whither it be done out of Strife or good Will, I do rejoice, yeu and will rejoice. Phi. i. 15.

'Tis true, when a Mans Life or Estate is at Stake. it is reasonable

nable he shou'd be Publickly Try'd and Confronted with his Accusers, and it is a great Excellency in our Law, that it requires such Publick Tryals, so that no Man shall be Condemn'd without being allow'd to make his Defence. But when a Pecuniary Mult is all the Punishment to be inflicted on a Swearer, for a Sin hateful to GOD and Man, he is intitled to no such Favour. The *Laws* against *Swearing* are just, which in other Cases wou'd seem severe. That Sin has no Temptation to Extenuate its Guilt, and therefore the utmost Rigour of the *Law*, is but too gentle a Punishment for it. And indeed it is very plain that our *Law-Makers* design was, that *Swearers* shou'd be treated after another manner than most other Criminals; because by the Statute against *Swearing*, the Oath of one Person is sufficient to make *them* lyable, to the Penalty of it. And that it was *their* intencion that the *Informers* shou'd in many cases be kept secret; at least that a discretionary power shou'd be lodg'd in the *Magistrate* to conceal them, when he saw a reasonable cause of so doing, we have reason to believe from hence, because they cou'd not but foresee, that the constant discovery of the *Informers*, must needs discourage many from *Informing*, and prove a great Obstruction to the due Execution of the *Law*, if not render it entirely useless. Besides, Private Informations, are much more allowable against *Swearing*, than in any other Case that can happen. For he who *Inform*s against a *Swearer*, proceeds upon very different motives, from those who *Inform* against *Felons* or *Traytors*, or are Witnesses in *Disputes* betwixt particular Men. In cases of *Felony*, those who are injur'd, Prosecute the *Felon*, and spare neither Expence nor Trouble, to find out the Truth. They will invire Men to a Discovery, by Proposals of Reward, and can compel those (who may be otherwise unwilling) to declare upon Oath what they know. And the same Methods are taken in all *Disputes* at Law. In Cases of *Treason*, Honours, Preferments and Estates are promis'd, and liberally bestow'd to Encourage *Informations*. And 'tis necessary it shou'd be so, the publick safety being so nearly concern'd. But they who *Inform* against *Swearers*, have no Rewards to Tempt them, nor are they compell'd by any Fears. From Men they

suffer nothing if they do not Inform, they gain nothing if they do. And are acted only by a *Generous Zeal*, for the Honour and Service of GOD.

'Tis hard, I confess, if not impossible, for *Laws* to be so contriv'd, but some way or other they may be perverted and abus'd, but in the Case now before us, I think the Question is not, whether ever an Innocent Person was mistaken and accus'd as Guilty: But which sort of *Informations*, *Publick* or *Private*, is attended with the worst Consequences, and clog'd with the most Inconveniencies? Whither it be not better and more Expedient, to have *Swearing* suppress'd by *Private Informations*, though it shou'd happen through Inadvertency and Errour, that once in an Age, one who was not Guilty of that Sin, shou'd be Accus'd and Punish'd, as if he had been Guilty: Or an *Informer* shou'd be acted by unwarrantable Principles, or some base Passion? Than by obliging Magistrates always to discover the *Informers*, to have the main end of so good a Law, against a Sin so Heinous, and yet so prevailing, in a great measure defeated? And this leads me in the

Second place, To shew that *Private Informations* are not only *Just*, but highly *Expedient and Necessary*. And they are so,

I. Because *Private Informations* lay greater restraints upon *Swearers*, than they wou'd otherwise be under. Men will be afraid to Swear in Publick, when they do not know but some present may *Inform* against them, yet they never know who they are. Now the End of *Laws* is rather to hinder Men from doing Evil, than to Punish them for it. And if this be better answer'd by *Private Informations*, than it cou'd be were they still to be *Publick*: If they make Men timorous and reserv'd, and very cautious how they openly Blaspheme GOD, since they cannot be sure, but some *Informers* tho *unknown*, are present: Does not all this shew the Expediency and Necessity, of such *Private Informations*? 'Tis true, the presence of GOD shou'd have a stronger Influence upon us, than of the whole World, and his Judgments shou'd be dreaded more, then all that Man can do. But since we find it otherwise, our *Laws* must be accordingly contriv'd

triv'd and executed, that they who are so Impious, as not to be afraid of Heaven, may yet be kept under all possible restraints by Men.

Secondly, *Private Informations* are necessary, because they secure the *Informers*, from the Rage and Insults, of Malicious and Revengeful Men. For what reason can *Swearers* have, with so much Eagerness and Passion, to desire to know who *Inform'd* against them? Can it be any other, than that they may Study how to be Reveng'd of them, for what they judge a great Injury, tho in reality a great Favour. Now that which makes *Swearers* so Inquisitive after *Informers*, shou'd make *Magistrates* conceal them. The Prudence and Zeal of the *one*, shou'd be a security against the Malice of the *other*. And surely all *Laws* shou'd be so contriv'd, that they who are *Zealous* for the Execution of *them*, may not suffer by it. And since they who *Inform* against *Swearing*, reap no Temporal Advantage thereby, can it be reasonable to expose them to Infamy, and Shame, and Ruin. Which wou'd be unavoidable, if they were commonly known.

And that it wou'd be so, will appear very evident if we consider what is notorious to all, that they who are most *Zealous in pressing Swearing* by constant *Informations*, are of the lower Rank of Mankind, who support their Families, by Industry and constant Labour: But that they who are most Guilty, and most commonly Punish'd, are considerable for their Stations and Fortunes, or formidable for their United Numbers: *As Officers of the Army and Soldiers; many Gentlemen of Quality and Estates, with their Servants and Dependants.* Now can it be reasonable to expose Poor Men to the Hatred and Revenge of those, who are too Wicked to consider the good Design of those who *Inform'd* against them; and too powerful not to be able, to do them Mischief, to Blacken their Reputations, and to Ruin their Fortunes, and it is well if they spare their Lives? So that to discover all who *Inform* against *Swearing*, wou'd be a Cruelty equal to that of the *Primitive Persecutors*, who cover'd the unhappy Christians, with the Skins of Wild Beasts, and then turn'd Dogs and Lyons loose upon them. And is it not a Melancholy thing

thing to consider, that if *Private Informations* be lay'd aside, a good Man must either neglect a necessary Duty, let Wickedness go on and enlarge its Conquests; or if it does oppose it, must run the hazard of being undone with his Family.

True, every Man ought to discharge his Duty, what ever may be the Consequences of his doing so. But we know, and ought to consider, that many good Men are Timorous in their Natures, or Low in their Fortunes. Men may be good Christians, though not qualified to be *Martyrs* for Religion. They may have great Zeal against Vice, yet be unwilling openly to encounter it, when besides Pains and Trouble, they must in all likelihood suffer Poverty and Disgrace. And therefore we may reasonably hope, that our *Magistrates* will have such a regard for Humane Nature, as to consider Mens Practice, as well as their Duty: What it is probably they will do, as well as what in strictness they ought to do: And that the Insolent Clamours of those who are Angry, that they may not still Swear, as formerly without controul, will not hinder them from so managing *Informations*, that none may be discourag'd nor afraid to give them, which is hardly possible, unless the *Informers* be Conceal'd.

But *Private Informations* are so far from being Unjust or unreasonable, that in the *Third and Last* place, they who suffer most by them, have no reason to desire that the Practice shou'd be otherwise. And that for these Two Reasons.

First, Because *Private Informations* secure the Swearer who is Punish'd, from the Temptation of adding Revenge to Propriety, and aggravating one Heinous Sin, by the addition of another. A good Man is glad to be Ignorant of those who have done him evil Wrongs, that so the Charitable Temper of his Mind, and Peace of his Soul, may not be alter'd nor disturb'd. And what ever the Swearer may think, in the present violence of his Passion, yet it is a real Kindness in the *Magistrate* to keep him in the Dark, and he himself will be effectually convinc'd of this in the End. He will find in his Oaths alone, sufficient matter for a bitter *Repentance*, without the additional Guilt of Revenge; or if he Dyes without *Repentance*, his Curses will of themselves,

Intitle him to that *Damnation* he has so often Imprecated himself; and his Torments will be great enough, without the load of another Sin, to encrease them.

Secondly, Because *Private Informations* (as was said before) do better restrain Men from Swearing, than can be done any other *Practicable way*. And can it be a valuable Advantage to Men of Reason, that they may *Swear* as without any reverence for GOD, so without any fear of Punishment from Men? Can they be fond of the Nauseous Liberty of being as *Prophane* as they please? Have not many Men reason to Bless GOD, that they were afraid, or asham'd to do many things, to which they were violently prompted by the Fury of their Passions? And can any Man in his cool Thoughts be Angry, that there are Laws made to hinder *him* from being a *Blasphemer* himself, and Infecting others with his Crimes? So Mad-men think themselves Wise, and are enrag'd at their Confinement. But when restor'd to their Reason, they Bless the Hands that Bound them and prevented the Violent Effects of their Distemper. And so will it be with *Swearers*, when they are so happy as to be reclaim'd they change their Oaths and Curses, into Prayers and Praises. Nay the most harden'd of them all, will on their Death-Beds alter their Language, and wish with all the Horrors of *Despairing Wretches*, that the *Laws* against *Swearing* had been more Severe, and Executed with greater Rigour, and that some of his Blood rather than his Money, had been the Penalty of every Oath.

In short then, *Private Informations* against *Swearing* are Just, so long as they are True, and I never heard of any that were otherwise, of any that were Falsly Maliciously and Accus'd. And it is hardly possible they shou'd; no Man being under the least Temptation, to be Guilty of such a Horrid Sin. *Private Informations* are expedient and necessary, because by them the end of the *Law* is best answer'd and promoted; without them many wou'd be Guilty of *Swearing*, who by it are restrain'd from it, and many who are Guilty, wou'd escape Punishment. Good Men wou'd be laid open to the Hatred of many, and Contempt

of more: And they who are punish'd for *Swearing*, suffer nothing by the *Privacy* of the *Informations*, but that they cannot gratify their *Revenge*.

Having thus I hope shewn the Duty of *Informing* against Vice and Prophaness, and Vindicated the Practice of *Private Informations* against *Swearing*, I now at length proceed to my

Fourth and Last Particular, which is to offer such Motives, as are proper to excite and confirm our *Zeal*, that so we may be *Zealously Affected* always in the good thing, about which we ought to be engag'd.

And certainly if all the Arguments of both Worlds can convince us, if our most valuable Interests can awaken our Affections, or the best Examples can inflame our *Zeal*: If the most Honourable Employment can work on our Ambition, or the greatest Dangers quicken our Fears. If we have any concern for the happiness of the Church, and wou'd remove those differences, which have broken its Unity, and disturb'd its Peace. If we wou'd enjoy the truest Delights which are to be had below, and be intitled to extraordinary degrees of Glory above: If these are desirable things, and can make any Impressions on us, they all combine to excite and confirm our *Zeal*, in suppressing Vice and Prophaness, and promoting a *through Reformation of Manners* in every Rank among us.

But the better to excite and confirm both your *Zeal* and my own, I shall insist *particularly* on these things, and therefore entreat you with me to consider.

First, *That it is impossible we shou'd Love GOD, and be sincere in the Practice of Religion, without being Zealously Affected against Vice and Prophaness, and vigorously bent on the extirpation of it.* For without this *Zeal* nothing else we can perform, will be a sufficient Proof of the sincerity of our Love to GOD. Being just in our Dealings, and bountiful to the Poor, Temperate and Sober, constant Hearers of GOD's Word, and constant Guests at his Table, none of these are not only because these Duties may be perform'd, and yet the Love of GOD be the motive of none of them; but chiefly because the like actions will not be accepted in any Parallel Case.

Thus for Example, *Do I profess Friendship for another Man?* To convince him of its truth and reality it is not enough that I shew him all outward Marks of Honour and Esteem; that I treat him with the most endearing Cares, and always express my self to his Advantage. For if notwithstanding all this, I can hear him Slander'd without shewing some *Resentment*, and that by those who know I profess to be his *Friend*: If I can silently listen to Malicious Aspersions on his Credit, yet make no attempts to Vindicate his *Fame*: If I am privy to a Design whereby his *Life* or *Fortune* may be endanger'd, or his *Reputation* blasted; and yet never discover it to him, use no endeavours to prevent it: If all this I can do, and yet assume the sacred Name of *Friend*, my Pretensions are false and disguis'd, and *Hypocrite* is my truest Title.

Are these the Rules and Measures of our *Friendship* to Men, and will GOD accept our *Love* on any lower Terms? Dare we say we Love GOD, and yet can patiently hear his Being and Providence Disown'd, His Word Ridicul'd, and His Glorious Name Prophan'd? No 'tis plain there must be a want of true *Love* to GOD in the Soul, when little or none appears on the most necessary occasions, then when his Honour and Service call for the most publick expressions of *It*: Let me see any Man near so much mov'd when GOD is Dishonour'd in his presence, as he wou'd be, shou'd any presume to Reflect on the Memory of his *Dead Father*, and then I will not suspect sincerity of his Love.

Besides, whatever Religious Actions we may our selves perform, can never without this *Christian Zeal* against *Prophaness* and *Vice*, proceed from Right Principles; from worthy *Apprehensions* of the Nature and Perfections of GOD, *His Infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness*. For these Principles do equally incline us to suppress Wickedness in others, as to be Pious and Virtuous our selves. Thus do I, for Example, Love GOD because of his Goodness? That must needs move me very powerfully to Hate Sin, which is the greatest Contradiction to that Goodness; and what I passionately Hate I will labour to destroy. Do I with the Humility becoming a Creature, Reverence GOD's Word, and Adore

his Name ? Then I cannot hear both these Impiously *Prophan'd*, but strong Resentments will arise in my Mind. And therefore if it be otherwise with us, we have cause to suspect our selves, and may justly fear, that all our other Acts of Service, how exact so ever we may be in the performance of them, will be rejected of GOD as mere pretence and shew, as so many Instances of Religious Deceit.

But farther, we know that true *Piety* is ever attended with great *Charity* and *Compassion* for the Souls of them. And indeed it cannot possibly be otherwise. For the more we Love GOD, (*that is, the more truly Pious we are*) the more shall we be like Him, the nearer approaches shall we make to his Nature. But now Love to Mankind, is the most Glorious Attribute of the Deity, and *doing us Good*, is his most Delightful Work : For Happiness he Created us, and sent his Son to put us into a Capacity of Bliss and Glory. Surely then if we Love GOD in sincerity, those who are the declar'd Objects of his *Love*, must be so of *Ours*. Their Happiness we will consult, and spare no pains to deliver them from Destruction. He who Loves GOD sincerely, and serves him faithfully, must needs be sensibly touch'd to see a Creature endu'd with a rational Nature, and a Soul that is Immortal, that yet does neither. A Wicked Man he pities most, and with great reason esteems him the most Unhappy of Mankind ; not an unfortunate Wretch broken upon the Wheel is so miserable, since the most exquisite Temporal Torments, bear no proportion to Everlasting Burnings.

Christianity is a *Generous Institution*, and inspires us with a *Charitable Concern* for the Happiness of others ; as the great end of it is to qualify us for the Society of Angels hereafter, so where it is allow'd to exert its Power, it gives us somewhat of their Divine Temper here, makes us endeavour after the *Conversion of Sinners*, and raises strong and lasting Joy in our Souls, whenever it is effected. And can that Man be esteem'd a sincere Christian, who has no regard for his Brothers Eternal Happiness ? Who will not labour to stop the progress of a Contagious Vice, and thereby prevent the Ruin of many Souls ? Let him

him pretend what he will to prove that he Loves GOD, it is all Hypocrisie and Disguise; for it is a Truth Written in Heaven, as well as Recorded in Scripture, *That he who Loves not his Brother whom he has seen, can never Love GOD whom he has not seen.*

And what a Melancholly Surprize will it be to many, when at the Last Day the Great Judge of the World, shall bid them depart from him, notwithstanding all their Pompous Devotions, and Gawdy appearances of Religion? And *that* because they were not *Zealously Affected against Vice, and did not Industiously promote Reformation of Manners?* Because they labour'd not to retrieve the decay'd Spirit of Christianity, and were Negligent and Indifferent when the Cause of Religion was at Stake? And what various Passions of Indignation, of Grief and Shame must distract such unhappy Souls, when the Son of GOD shall thus Expostulate with them? "Can ye hope to dwell with me, for whom you never had any true Honour, whose Cause you did not Plead, whose Interest you did not Elpouse? Can you say you sincerely Lov'd me, when you declin'd my most Necessary Service, *the Punishment of Vice, and Advancement of Piety?* What tho you did not Prophane my Name your selves, yet others you cou'd hear do it with a Smile: And did rather Encourage than Suppress that Sin? And since through your want of Zeal, many escape that Punishment, which their Lewdness deserv'd, is it not reasonable that you shou'd share in their Torments, as you contributed towards their Guilt? *Therefore you must have no Honour from me, whom you did never Honour:* And seeing you in effect *Deny'd me* upon Earth, by neglecting my Service, Justice requires that you shou'd be disown'd by me for ever.

And what Reply shall such unhappy Sinners be able to make to *Infinite Justice*, when thus Arraign'd before Angels and Men! Must they not be struck with silent Horrors at the Charge, and Agonies of Soul too big to be utter'd? But if they presume to speak at all, their Language must be made up of Guilty Acknowledgements: They must own the Justice, even when they begin to feel the severity of their Sentence.

Secondly, Another Motive to *excite and confirm our Zeal in the good things* about which it ought to be *engag'd, suppressing Publick Vice, and promoting Reformation of Manners*; is the consideration of its being the most *Honourable Service* wherein we can be employ'd. A *Service* of the greatest *Dignity and Glory*.

In other Cases the Worth and Greatness of the Person, to whom the *Service* is pay'd, renders it Honourable. Thus to be intrusted with the most Weighty Affairs of our *Prince and Country*, to Execute the Laws, and Encounter the Enemies of both, is what Ambitious Men are still aspiring after, and wherein they place their Glory and their Happiness: But now in this respect, no Service so Honourable as *Opposing and Suppressing Immorality and Prophaness*. It is the immediate Service of GOD himself, of the Supreme King and Governour of the World, before whom all Earthly Princes are as nothing. Whose Transcendent Nature nothing can comprehend, and who dazles all the Angels with the Brightness of his Glory.

Again, does the Excellency of those who are employ'd in any *Service* render it Honourable: Then none so *Honourable* as this. It is at once the work and delight of Angels, and the Heavenly Host esteem it their Privilege and Glory. For wherein consists the employment of the Ministering Spirits of Heaven? But in their being the Instruments of GOD's Justice in Punishing his Enemies, the Instruments of his Mercy in Rewarding his Servants? In their restraining us from Sin by their powerful Influence, and awakening us to Repentance by unseen ways? Those happy Beings that are above, whither Angels, or the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, are all *Zealous* of our *Reformation*: They Pray for our Repentance, they Rejoice at our Conversion, and long for our Society. And every Pious Soul that arrives safely among them, encreases their Raptures, and adds new strength and fervour to their Praises. And is not that a Glorious Service, whereby we Cooperate with the Holy Angels. And must not our being thus employ'd in the Work of Angels, be an excellent Preparative for their Conversation?

Lastly, The more useful any *Service* is, the more Honourable

it shou'd be esteem'd? Thus they who have been Authors of any great Good to the World, have been highly Honour'd while Alive, and when dead have been Ador'd. But what *Service* so useful as this? What way can we do so much good to Mankind, as by bringing Obstinate Offenders to Punishment, and removing Infectious Examples? As by extirpating Vice, and promoting Piety and Virtue? As by averting the Wrath of GOD, and smoothing the way to Heaven?

Let us not then be asham'd of our Great Masters Service, but Praise him for the Honour it confers upon us; and while others *Glory in their Wisdom, their Riches or their Might*, which are all Imperfect, Transient and Vain, if we Glory at all, let it be in this, that we are allow'd the privilege, and inspir'd with Grace, to be employ'd in our Heavenly *Fathers Business*.

Thirdly, *Another Motive to excite and confirm our Zeal against Prophaness and Vice, is the consideration of those many and Excellent Examples which recommend it.* And indeed we find none in the Holy Scriptures Eminent, for their Piety and Virtue, who were not equally remarkable for their *Zealous Endeavours* against Impiety and all sorts of Wickedness.

Noah was not only a Worker but Preacher of Righteousness; and of Lot it is said, that his Righteous Soul was vexed with the Sodomites filthy Conversation. How was Moses Transported at the Israelites Idolatry? His usual Meekness seem'd to have forsaken him, his Anger waxed hot, and he cast the Tables out of his Hands, and brake them beneath the Mount. Phineas's Zeal is Recorded to his Honour, it stop'd the Raging Pestilence, and Calm'd the Anger of an Incensed GOD. Holy David expressed his Zeal, in great Variety of Passions, it appear'd in his Hatred, his Joy, and in his Grief. In his Hatred: *I have Hated the Congregation of the Wicked, and will not sit among the Ungodly.* In his Joy: *I was glad, says he, when they said unto me, we will go into the House of the LORD.* He was glad to see Piety prevailing among others, and that the Motion of going to the House of the LORD

2 Pet. 2. 5.
verse 7. 8.

Exod. 32. 19.

Numb. 25.
11, 12, 13.

Psal. 106.
30.

Psal. 26. 5.

Psal. 122. 1.

LORD shou'd come from any besides himself. But the greatness of his *Zeal* chiefly shew'd it self in his Grief, a truly *Zealous* Man meeting with many more occasions of Sorrow, than Joy from others: And therefore the Psalmists Language is sometimes very Mournful; *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* And again. *I beheld the Transgressors and was grieved, because they kept not thy Word.* How Zealous was *Elijah* against *Idolatry*? He boldly Reprov'd the King of *Israel*, and destroy'd the Priests of *Baal*, tho he was no Stranger to *Jezabels* Revengeful Spirit. Nay he appeal'd to GOD himself that he had been very Zealous for the LORD GOD of *Hefts*. *Nehemiah* is a Noble Example of Zeal and Courage, fit for all Christians, but chiefly *Magistrates* to follow; He Contended with the Great Men of *Judah*, for *Prophaning the Sabbath*. He did not modestly pass by their Faults, out of respect to their Quality, nor gently touch, as if afraid to hurt them; but oppos'd all abuses of the *Sabbath*, with great Zeal and Resolution, and at last effectually suppress'd them, tho very general and prevailing.

The Time wou'd fail me to mention all the Prophets, & Apostles; the Primitive Saints, Confessors, and Martyrs, who have been Eminent Examples of a *servent Zeal*, who valu'd not Ease, nor Fame, nor Life, so they might propagate the *True Religion*, and effectually discourage *Impiety and Vice*. A Zeal which Conquer'd the World, and all the Powers of Darkness, to which nothing was too difficult to be done, nor too grievous to be suffer'd, in so Glorious a Cause. If we observe but the single instance of *St. Paul*, we cannot without amazement Reflect upon the many Persecutions, Calamities and Afflictions; the many Perils by Land and Sea, from his own Country-Men and Strangers, from open Enemies, pretended Friends, and false Brethren, which his Zeal embold'd him to meet, and enabl'd him to bear.

But behold we have a greater Example of *Holy Zeal* than he, and that is the Son of GOD, and Saviour of the World. It was Zeal for the Reformation and Happiness of the World, brought him

him down from Heaven, and expos'd him to Poverty and Misery, and Disgrace, here below : The same Holy Zeal made him boldly Reprove the Greatest among Men, whilst he familiarly Convers'd with the Meanest ; made him Toil and Labour *and go about doing Good*, even to those who made him the returns of Hatred, for his Good-Will. Out of Zeal for the True Religion he Unmask'd the Pharisees, and laid open their Hypocrisie, and brought upon himself the Hatred and Revenge, of that Malicious Dissembling Sect. Nay his Zeal made him once lay aside the Lamb, and with the Resentment as well as Authority of an Offended Judge, Vindicate the Honour of GOD, by *Scourging the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*. So that with great Justice, does the Evangelist apply that Expression of the Psalmist to our LORD, *the Zeal of thy House, hath* *Jo. 2. 15.*
Eaten me up. ^{17.}

But the most Stupendous Instance of Divine Zeal, is the Blessed Jesus, Dying to promote the Glory of GOD, and happiness of Mankind. We Honour the Zeal of those who are willing to undergo Trouble, and run a few Hazards for Religion What then shall we say of the Zeal of our Blessed Saviour? Zeal, which Nail'd him to the Cross, and Shed his Blood, and made him yield up the Ghost? Zeal which made his Soul all Gloominess and Horror, depriv'd him of the usual Manifestations of his Fathers Love, forc'd him to cry out *that his GOD had forsaken him*, and in the bitterest Agonies of Soul and Body to expire. This was wonderful Zeal indeed, nay Zeal that wants a Name, being beyond our Expressions, and even too narrow Thoughts : Yet such as shou'd strongly engage us to the exactest Imitation we are capable of, and turn our whole Soul into Flames of Zeal and Love for him, to whom we owe whatever we enjoy or hope for, who even lay'd down his Life for us, to Rescue us from Misery, and Intitle us to Eternal Glory.

Such *Examples* of Zeal does the Word of GOD set before us, the best & greatest we can have, even Patriarchs & Kings, Prophets and Apostles, and above all the Great Captain of our Salvation, the Holy Jesus. And while we have these in view, can any of us be
cold

cold and indifferent in that Service, which is most acceptable to GOD, *the Promotion of Religion, and Reformation of Manners*: In other Cases Examples raise a Generous Emulation, they give us Courage to attempt the most difficult Undertakings, and Constancy to endure the greatest Tryals: And shall this be the single Instance, in which we are not allow'd to be out-done by all? Let us then blush and hang down our Heads, when we compare our own Slothfulness with the unwearied Labours of others, and find our selves backward to meet with Difficulties and Dangers, in a Service wherein so many have chearfully Sacrific'd their Lives.

But to these Primitive Examples, give me leave to add one of this present Age, of a Person Eminent for the Greatness of her Station, much more for Piety and Goodness, whose Memory we all Honour, and whose Untimely Death we yet bewail, I mean our late *Excellent QUEEN*, whose Zeal for Piety and Religion, seem'd to out-shine Her other Excellent Qualities. She was not Diverted by the Solitudes of a Crown, from neglecting any Religious Duty Her self: Her Example Recommended Piety to the World, with all its Native Charms: And in Her appear'd all the Majesty of a Queen, with the Unaffected Humility of the Devoutest Christian. Nothing went nearer Her Heart, than that *Immorality and Prophaness*, She perceiv'd every where prevailing, and nothing with so much Joy did She Encourage, as what had a tendency towards *Reformation of Manners*. Of which I need give but one Instance, the Countenance She gave the *Societies for Reformation in England*. " For (as we learn from a very

Fig. 8. 9. " Pious and Useful Book Intituled, *An Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners, &c.*) having

" this Affair laid before her, in the absence of the King, by a Pre-
" late of Great Learning and Fame, (the late Lord Bishop of
" *Worcester*) she had just Sentiments of it, and therefore thought
" it became her to give it Countenance: She Graciously condescended to Thank those who were concern'd in it, and readily
" promised them her Assistance; and afterwards upon Application
" made to her Majesty, she was pleas'd to send her Letter to the

" *Justices*

" *Justices of Middlesex, Commanding them to put the Laws*
 " *against Prophaness and Vice in Execution, with all Fidelity and*
 " *Impartiality : And to this end, that they shou'd be careful and di-*
 " *ligent in Encouraging all Persons to do their Part, in giving Inform-*
 " *mations against Offenders, as they were obliged by their Oath, as Ma-*
 " *gisstrates to do : And when there was further occasion, she*
 " *shew'd she was in Earnest to promote this Design, by taking*
 " *other more Effectual Methods for that purpose.*

" And she took particular satisfaction, in those other Page 16.

" Societies of Religious Persons, who meet to Pray,
 " Sing Psalms, and Read the Holy Scriptures together ; and to
 " Reprove, Exhort and Edifie one another, by their Religious
 " Conferences ; she enquired often and much about them, and was
 " glad they went on and prevailed.

Such was the Hearty and Affectionate Concern, such were the Zealous Endeavours, of that Excellent Woman, to promote this great Work of *Reforming a Wicked Age* : Of her, who was the Glory and Ornament of her Sex and Crown ; who now enjoys the Reward of her Piety and Zeal, *a Crown incorruptible and that fadeth not away.* She esteem'd the Persons who were principally concern'd in it, and approv'd of the Methods propos'd to accomplish it ; and is not her Approbation alone, a sufficient Answer, to all the Objections that have been rais'd against it ? Hers, I say, whose Judgment and Prudence, were equal to Her Piety and High Condition ? And shou'd not so Great, so Good an Example, engage Persons of all Ranks and Qualities, to joy'n Vigorously in Prosecuting the same Design ? Shou'd it not especially inflame the Zeal of Her own Sex, and Influence them to do all that in them lies, to Check and Restrain Vice, to Encourage and Promote Piety and Virtue ?

They Boasted of Her (and very justly) while She Liv'd, they profess a Veneration for Her very Name, now that She is gone ; let them shew it by Contributing what they can, to that Noble Undertaking, wherein She express'd so much Satisfaction. And if they have but *Zeal*, they cannot want ways of expressing it to their own great Honour, and the benefit of the World.

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They

They may serve it by their Prayers, (in the constancy and fervency whereof, we must own they usually exceed us,) and draw down upon it the Blessings of Heaven. They can often with great Advantage Recommend it to others, and Engage Persons of Power and Authority to Encourage it. And Lastly, they may do much towards *Reforming* the World, by a Prudent Management of their Families, by instilling good Principles into their Children betimes, and making them in Love with GOD and Religion ; as also by a strict and constant Inspection, into the Lives and Manners of their Servants.

And if there needed any other Motive to excite their Zeal, after mentioning the Example of our Excellent QUEEN. I wou'd desire them to consider, that one main Branch of that Publick *Reformation of our Manners*, which is attempted at this time, does directly tend to Vindicate the Credit of their Sex. They must be sensible, that it suffers by those Wretched Creatures who are lost to Shame, as well as Virtue: They know too well, that there have been some such Instances, even among those of more considerable Rank, and that Honour and Wealth have been the Rewards of a Scandalous Prostitution ; and they cannot be Ignorant what uncharitable Censures from the Observation of the Bad, have been pass'd upon the Good and Virtuous. And must not such Rejoice, when they see those Wretches Punish'd, who Dishonour their Sex, as well as their Religion? They must, they will express their Abhorrence of a Strumpet, let her Quality be never so High, and will leave nothing unattempted, to Banish such from the Society of those, who have any regard for Modesty and Virtue. So will they be Glorious Instruments in Promoting *Reformation of Manners*, and share with us, in the Honour and Advantage of so useful a Design *in this World*, and share with Her in Glory, whose Example I have been Recommending to them.

Fourthly, Another Motive to excite and confirm our Zeal against Prophaness and Vice is this, That the Endeavours of Good Men in this Kingdom to Promote *Reformation of Manners*, have been highly applauded in *England*. Great thanks are said

of them there, and greater expected from them. This we Learn from several Hands, particularly the Book I already Quoted, in these words. — “ The *Endeavours* of *Page 23. 24.* “ these *Gentlemen* have not been confin’d to this *City* “ and *Kingdom*, but have extended as far as *Ireland*, where they “ have had an Influence, very little, I think to the Honour of “ that *Kingdom*, from whence it had its *First Rise*, of which “ since a more particular account may be expected; I may satis- “ fie my self at present, with saying in general of my own Know- “ ledge, that the *Transactions*, of *Reformation* here, having been, “ near *Two Tears* since, laid before some few Persons in *Ireland*, “ and most of those (I must again observe) *Private Persons*, “ and of the *Lower Rank* of Men, with proper considerations to “ move e’m to unite in the same *Design*, and *Methods* to pursue “ it with Advantage, it determined them to engage heartily in “ it; and they have Prosecuted it with so much Vigour, that “ there are now *several Societies* for *Reformation*, in the *City* of “ *Dublin*; which I am assured by divers Accounts, that I have “ in my Hands from thence, are spreading into several Parts of “ the *Kingdom*, and are Encourag’d by His Excellency the Earl “ of *Galway*, one of the *Lords Justices* of *Ireland*, The Right “ Reverend the *Arch-Bishop* of *Dublin*, many of the *Clergy*, and “ the Best of the *Magistrates* and *Gentlemen* of that *City*: In one “ of which *Societies*, most of the *Parish-Ministers* of *Dublin*, se- “ veral of the *Pious Bishops*, particularly, the Celebrated *Arch-* “ *Bishop*, and divers other *Persons of Quality* are Members; some “ of which have shewn a *Zeal*, which if it prevail’d the *Three* “ *Kingdoms* over, might soon produce a Glorious Reverse of the “ State they are now in, and which in less than *Two Tears* space “ hath succeeded, (tho not without such various Oppositions, as “ might be expected from Combinations of Bad Men) to that “ degree in *Dublin*, that the *Prophanation* of the *Lords-Day*, by “ *Tipling* in *Publick Houses*, by Exercising of *Trade*, and Expo- “ sing of *Goods* to Sale, is almost suppress’d; that *Lewd Women* “ are so strictly enquired after, and severely Punished, that they “ have Transported themselves, as in *England*, to our *Plantations*;

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“ and

“and that *Swearing* is so run down, that an Oath is rarely heard;
 “in their *Streets*; so that *Publick Disorders* are remarkably Cured;
 “and in short, *Vice* is afraid and ashamed to shew its Head, where
 “within a few Years past, it was Daring and Triumphant.

This Account, Blessed be GOD, is in the main true, and my Design in mentioning it to you, is not to Please or Flatter you, by telling what you have done, but to excite and spur you on to double your diligence, and make it more apparent to the World, how answerable your *Zeal* is, to the Character that has been publicly given of it. Commendations do generally improve, and nourish Virtue; and will it not be base and dishonourable, shou’d we hereafter fall short of what is publish’d to the World concerning us? Are our *Magistrates* and *Clergy* Commended, for discharging their Duty with *so much Zeal*? And shou’d not those among us blush who are conscious to themselves, that they are Intitled to none of these Praises? Let us then resolve not to lose the *Reputation* we have already gain’d; least it be hereafter as publicly declar’d of us, that for a while indeed we seem’d warm, and in earnest against *Vice*, but that our First Fervours are gone, and we are unhappily reconcil’d to our Old Sins; and are lyable to the Character of the *Foolish Builders* who began a good Work indeed, but cou’d not bring it to an end.

’Tis true, we ought no more to do a Good Action to be Prais’d of Men, than we shou’d do an Evil one, to avoid their Censures: And I trust in GOD that your *Zeal* will never be Infected with the least mixture of *Vain Glory*. Yet just Praises are the Rewards of Virtue, and shou’d be so esteem’d. And it is our Duty not only to be sincerely Religious, but open Advocates for Piety; to stir up others by our *Zeal*, and so to let our *Light shine before Men*, that they may see our good Works, and Glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

I might mention, as another Motive, to excite and confirm your *Zeal* against *Prophaness* and *Vice*, the necessity of it, to avert the just Wrath and heavy Judgments of GOD, and the reason we have to expect and dread them if Iniquity still prevail: And that we can hope to escape them on no other Terms, than our

Endeavouring

Endeavouring with great Industry and Sincerity, to suppress all kinds of *Wickedness*.

The truth of this might be easily demonstrated from the *Word* of GOD, and from the End and Reason of his *Judgments*; this is most apparent from his Method of dealing with other Nations, of this we may be convinc'd from his dealings with our selves: But this has been so fully insisted on, and largely prov'd by others, that I shall do no more than name it; And pass on to a

Fifth Motive, to excite and confirm our *Zeal* for *Reformation* of *Manners*, and against all Prophane and Immoral Practices, namely, that we have reason to hope, that it may prove hereafter an excellent means of Uniting the *Establish'd Church*, and the *Dissenters*; and of Propagating the *Reform'd Religion*, among those who are Strangers to it, and prejudic'd against it.

It will not be here needful to inquire into the Immediate Causes of our unhappy Divisions, nor shall I take up your time in Lamenting the Miseries which have been, and still are the consequences of them. It concerns us much more to learn, how our Breaches may be Heal'd, and those Wounds Cur'd, which have often reduc'd our *Religion* to a very Languishing Condition.

And they who have most seriously considered this matter, have with great reason observ'd, that nothing will more allay our Hearts and Animosities; nothing lay a better Foundation for a firm and lasting Union among *Protestants*, than our becoming *Zealous* and *Active* against *Vice* and *Prophaness*.

For *First*, our jointly endeavouring to beat down Publick Wickedness, must needs Unite the Affections of all those who are concern'd, in that Excellent Undertaking. We cannot but Love and Value all who have an *Active Zeal* for GOD and Religion, tho in some things, their *Judgments* may be different from ours. There are Charms in Piety, which none can resist, and if we Love GOD our selves, we must Love those also who serve him in Humility and Sincerity of Heart, tho we may judge them mistaken in things of lesser Moment. But now Unity of Affection is a necessary Preparative for Unity of Judgment; and true Holy *Zeal* Unites the Minds, as well as Hearts of all those

those in whom it dwells. And if we go on to assist one another in Suppressing *Lewdness*, *Immorality* and *Prophaness*, we will soon be convinc'd that differences of Opinion, about the circumstances of Religion, when we agree in all the Essentials of it, shou'd never make us Hate and Calumniate one another. But that whatever our Sentiments, as to some particulars may be, we are Brethren and Fellow Christians, Servants of the same Lord, Partakers of the same Blessed Hope, and Heirs of the same Eternal Kingdom: That tho we differ in a little in the Roads we take, yet we both direct our Course, towards the same Heaven, whither they who are truly Pious, Humble and Sincere of both Parties, may hope to arrive at last, and where without Controversie or Dispute, they shall for ever dwell together, in the profoundest Peace, and most charitable Agreement.

But as our being truly *Zealous* against *Prophaness* and *Vice*, has a natural tendency to Unite our Affections, so in the *Second place*, it will convince us of the necessity of Uniting together, in Worship, and Sacraments, and every other way. For the more *Zealous* we are against *Vice*, the more clearly will we see, the great Milchiefs which are caus'd by our Divisions, the more fully will we be convinc'd, that they are the great Hindrances of a *General Reformation of Manners*; that the most prevailing Vices and Impieties are owing to them, and that till they be remov'd, *Reformation* may be wish'd for, but can never be happily Effectcd.

For this is the great Popular Objection, against our Religion, insisted on so much by the Enemies of Piety, that there are so many Parties among us, that they know not whom to close with, and therefore will treat them all with equal Neglect and Scorn. This is what some pretend to justify their Impiety, and is the real cause, why others are Prophane; and cannot be but a Stumbling Block to many weak Minds. Besides, Dissentions in Religion, destroy Ecclesiastical Discipline, and deprive Church Censures of their Force. They enfeeble the Civil Power, and compell *Magistrates* to Wink at great Irregularities. They distract Private Families, and separate the nearest Relations. Where they prevail,

prevail, the State is seldom free from Tumultuous Disorders, nor the Church from numerous Heresies and Schisms without end. And in short, they naturally lead to the Subversion of all sober Religion, all Peace and Order. Nay our Divisions, not only cause most of our Distempers, but hinder our Cure, they weaken the Hands, and obstruct the Endeavours of those, who are *Zealous* for Suppressing Publick Vices. For he must be a Stranger to Humane Nature who does not know, that so long as there are separate Parties, there will be separate Interests, and that many will Prosecute their particular Designs, to the prejudice of the common cause of Religion. One Party will be sometimes for Acting alone, and that will raise Jealousies in the other; at least there's cause to fear that they will not always Act with that Confidence in each other, upon which in a great measure their Success depends. These things I confess ought not to be so, and all that can be said for them is, with Humility to own, that even good Men are Frail, and not above the Passions and Weaknesses incident to our Nature. But now they who are truly Zealous against Prophaness and Vice, must needs be sensible how Fatal our particular Controversies are to Christianity in general, to *Piety & Virtue*. And therefore they cannot but pray for Unity, with all the Fervour of their Souls, and will spare no Pains to procure so inestimable a Blessing. All prudent Attempts for Peace, they will Encourage and Promote, and submit to many Inconveniences, rather than want it. And if all Parties among us, were thus *Zealously Affected*, if every one laid to Heart our Crying Sins, and consider'd our Divisions as (and such sure I am, they have been and are) one Principle Cause of them: How soon might we hope to see a happy Change! How fast wou'd all our Disputes and Controversies Fall and Dye! Then we shou'd soon behold what *David* pronounces so *Good*, and *Pleasant*, *Brethren Dwelling* and Worshipping GOD *together in Unity* and Peace: And our Church below, wou'd in all respects be a lively Emblem of the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

But farther *Thirdly*, Our being *Zealously Affected* against *Prophaness and Vice*, will if we continue and persevere in our *Zeal*, lay

lay a firm Foundation for a lasting Union among us, because it will turn our *Zeal* into its true Channel, and fix it upon its right Object, and that is the *Suppressing* of known Sins, and the *Promoting* of Piety and Virtue, and *Reformation of Manners*.

It is very certain, and much to be lamented, that many, both Members of the Establish'd Church and Dissenters also, are more Zealous for their particular Opinions wherein they differ, than the great things of Religion wherein they agree. This is manifest from the Practice of both. Thus we find that those who seem warm for the Establish'd Constitutions, shall be esteem'd and valu'd by others of the same Principles, tho Guilty of many Irregularities in their Lives. And the Case is the very same among the Dissenters. Those who are hearty for their Interests and firm to their Party, shall be Care's'd and Celebrated for their *Zeal*, tho in many things their Practices are Immoral. Now of this I can assign no other Reason, but that the *Zeal* of both Parties, has been unhappily Diverted from things of the greatest, to those of little importance, in comparison of the other. And not only so, but mightily inflam'd by the Artifices of our Common Enemies. It has been the constant Endeavour of those who study'd our Ruin, strongly to engage us in Contentions, about the Out-side of Religion, and our minds were kept in such a constant ferment and hurry by these Differences, that we cou'd not observe, at least did not, sufficiently consider it, how Atheism and Infidelity, Irreligion and Vice, were entering in at our Breaches. We were like the Unfortunate Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* during the last Dreadful Siege, who were more Violent against one another, than the *Romans*, the avow'd Enemies of them all.

But now were our Zeal once Vigorously Employ'd, in beating down Vice and Prophaness, were our Warmth and Industry in that great Affair, answerable to the moment of it; then our Passions against our Brethren wou'd cool of themselves, and our Resentments gradually abate, and at last be quite extinguisht. Our Wounds wou'd no more Fester, but Close and Heal. And we wou'd Love and Value Men, not according to their *Engagements*

to a Party, but their *Zeal* and Concern for Virtue and Holiness and all our Endeavours we wou'd Unite against the Enemies of Religion in general, the *Vicious and Profane*.

And that our *Zeal* against *Vice*, were it strong and Active, as it ought to be, wou'd be attended with these happy Consequences, is what we will easily be convinc'd of, if we consider that our Faculties are so imperfect, that they cannot with any degree of Intensity, be exercis'd at once upon different Objects; and that as any one of our Passions, whither *Love*, *Hatred*, or *Anger*, encreases towards one Object, it must abate with respect to all others. If our Passion is divided upon several Objects, it must act weakly upon them all, if confin'd to one, it is Strong and Violent. As Rivers whatever they gain upon the Land of one side, lose proportionably of the other; and if their Waters run in one Channel, they are impetuous, and with a mighty Torrent, force their way, but when separated into many Streams, they glide insensibly along. Now 'tis easie to apply all this, to the Case before us. So long as we were warmly engag'd in Disputes, about *Modes* and *Ceremonies*, *Postures* and *Garments*, us'd in Religious Worship, it was not in our Power to be so *Zealous* against *Profaneness* and *Vice*, as we ought to have been, our *Zeal* was so exhausted by the one, that we had too little to spare for the other. But now that our *Zeal* begins to be better employ'd, to turn into another, and better Channel, our heat about other things will by degrees wear off, and a *Holy Zeal* against Impiety, and Publick Wickedness, succeed in its room. And when ever, by the Blessing of GOD this is happily Effectuated, will we not be apt to look back with Wonder, upon our former Disputes and Quarrels, and be surpriz'd that we shou'd be Angry with one another, when so many Publick Sins needed all our *Zeal* and Indignation, and Endeavours to Suppress them? Nay I am inclinable to hope, that we shall resemble the Happy Lovers in Heaven, that all our Peevish Mistakes shall be chang'd into Inviolable Love and Friendship, into the highest degrees of Endearment and Affection. And this we have no reason to despair of, if we consider in the

Fourth and Last place, that our being *Zealously Affected* against *Prophaness and Vice* will Intitle us to the Blessing of GOD, without which no Concord, no Unity, can be attain'd.

Many have wondred, considering the favourable Opportunities we have often had, which Invited the Establish'd Church and Dissenters to an Union, considering especially, how much our Interest and Common Safety call'd for it, that it has not yet been Effectuated. I will not pretend to judge where the fault lay, or whence it came to pass, that all endeavours hitherto us'd to Unite us have miscarry'd. Only it may be in general observ'd, that our want of true *Zeal* for GOD and Religion; our great Ingratitude for the many Mercies of Heaven, and *that* Corruption of Manners which almost universally prevail'd every where; all these I say, depriv'd us of the concurring Influence of Divine Providence, without which all Humane means are contriv'd and apply'd in vain; we wanted *that*, because we did not deserve it; Unity and Concord were too great Blessings for a People, who had made such ill returns to GOD, for all his other Favours.

But let us at last become truly Zealous for Virtue and Religion, and decline no Pains to Curb those Vices, which have so long Triumph'd over both; let it be our constant Study so to Execute the *Laws* against Impiety, that whoever dares be Wicked, may yet be afraid of a Discovery. Then may we look up to GOD; and expect his Blessing upon our *Endeavours & Prayers* for *Union*, as well as *Reformation*: Let us but qualifye our selves for it, and with great boldness we may say, *LORD speak the Word, and thy Servants shall be Healed.*

And shou'd the goodness of GOD so far bless our *Zeal*, as at once to make it the means of Suppressing our Vices, and Curing our Divisions, what reason wou'd we have, with all the Ardours of the Heavenly Host, to Praise and Adore the Divine Clemency and Mercy! Love and Peace *as among them*, prevailing every where! Piety and Religion gaining Proselytes every Day! and none daring to be openly *Vicious or Prophane*! These are I own, too great Blessings to be fully expected in this World, yet we shou'd not distrust GOD's Power, nor question his Goodness.

Great

Great things have succeeded very slender and discouraging Beginnings: And it is agreeable to the Wisdom of Providence, that it shou'd be so; least we shou'd vainly ascribe that to our selves, which is wholly due to GOD.

But it is not we alone, who shall receive all the Benefit of this Holy Zeal, for it not only Promotes Unity and Peace among our selves, but will be a means of Propagating our *Reform'd Religion* among those who are Ignorant of it, and prejudic'd against it.

For how comes it to pass, that the *Reformation* for above an Age, has been almost wholly at a stand, or rather declining? And if it has any where gain'd Ground, it has in other places lost more; whereas at the Beginning it carry'd all before it, and nothing cou'd oppose its Conquests? The best reason of this that I can give is, that the *Piety* and *Zeal*, the *Purity* and *Stedfastness* of our first *Reformers*, Charm'd and Subdu'd their very Enemies. They were all Eminent for Holiness and Goodness, for Charity and Zeal, for Constancy and Patience. But now there's a fatal reverse of things, we are fallen into many of those Sinful Courses, which heretofore were peculiar to the Church we left. Our Zeal has sensibly decay'd, Piety Flourishes not among us, as it did among them, nor is the *Reformation* of our Lives, answerable to that of our Faith. But yet if the Spirit which acted our *Reformers*, did again revive in us, it wou'd still produce as considerable Effects.

'Tis very true, that the Prejudices which those of the Church of Rome, have Suck'd in their Education against us, are great and strong, yet Exemplary Holiness, and Prudent Zeal, wou'd in due time perfectly overcome them. These wou'd Command Respect even from our Bitterest Enemies, and effectually convince them of the Excellency of our *Religion*, did they see so good Fruits of it in our Lives. This is the shortest and surest Method of dealing with them, for after all that can be said, by way of Argument, yet that will always be thought the best Church, which makes the Best and Holiest Christians: And unless our Practices be much better than theirs, they will never believe that our *Religion* can be so.

We may boast of the Purity of our Faith and Worship, and upbraid them with the Superstition and Absurdity of theirs; but after all, the prevailing Arguments must be the Innocence of our Lives, a hearty Zeal for the Honour of GOD, express'd in a Vigorous Prosecution of all that's *Vicious* and *Prophane*. These are sensible Arguments, and carry along with them powerful and lasting Convictions; these the most Ignorant can Comprehend, yet the most Learn'd cannot resist.

Sixthly and Lastly, *The most prevailing Motive of all, and which if duly weigh'd would not only excite and inflame our Zeal, but preserve it always Vigorous and Strong, is the Consideration of its exceeding great Reward.* And that with respect to both Worlds, in this it affords us the truest Satisfaction, and Intitles us to extraordinary degrees of Glory, in the other.

As to this World, if there be any such thing as Satisfaction in it, any thing exempted from that *Vanity* and *Vexation of Spirit*, wherewith the *Wise-Man* has charg'd the whole Creation. It does, it must consist in the pleasing Reflections of our own Minds, upon the good we have done to Mankind, by Suppressing *Prophaness* and *Vice*, and Encouraging *Piety* and *Virtue*. This is a Pleasure Rational and Noble, proper for him who is made after the Image of GOD: A Pleasure which stands the Test of Fruition and can never Cloy, but daily gives the Soul a grateful Relish of some new Delight: A Pleasure which abates our Troubles, and qualifies our Pains, which blunts the Edge of Sorrow, and calms the Disorders of the Soul, which inspires us with Courage at the Hour of Death, takes away its Sting, and deprives it of its Terrors.

And with what a generous bravery may we expect our end, if we have been Instrumental in Advancing *Religion* among Men! If we have liv'd to so good purpose, that any one Vice has been lessen'd by our Endeavours and Zeal! *That one Thought* will refresh us more, when in a Languishing Condition, or on a Dying Bed, than the Grandure of Princes, or Riches of the World.

What a Satisfaction must it be to a good *Magistrate*, when about to render an Account of his Office, to the Great King of Heaven,

Heaven, to consider that he has been Faithful to him that appointed him, has Justly and Impartially Executed the Laws against all sorts of Wickedness! To a good *Minister*! When ready to appear before the Great *Bishop of Souls*, that he can Reflect upon his Sincerity and Zeal; and Courage in the discharge of his Duty! That Vice he still oppos'd! And consider'd neither Interest, nor Reputation, nor Safety, when his Masters Service call'd for him! To a *Sincere Penitent*, when he looks back upon his Life, since his happy Conversion! That he made all possible Attonement, for his former Injuries to Religion, by bringing more to Repentance than he had formerly led astray! To all those who make *Religion* their Business, and *Reformation of Manners* their constant Study! To remember how Active, how Constant was their Zeal, what Labours and Troubles they underwent, what Slanders and Calumnies they bore, to Punish and Restrain Wickedness and Vice, to Maintain and promote Piety and Virtue! Such Thoughts as these will wonderfully Support Good Men, when they have a near view of Eternity; will Relieve their Languishing Spirits, and Raise their Dejected Heads, and Comfort their Departing Souls.

But neither the Joys nor Sufferings of this present World, are worthy to be compar'd with the Glory that shall hereafter be *Reveal'd*. There are Glories reserv'd for good Men, beyond any thing we can conceive or know: And of these extraordinary degrees belong to *those* who are *Zealously Affected always in good things*: To *those* who with great Industry and Application, Promote *Reformation of Manners*. For since that is a *Service* particularly pleasing to GOD, the Reward that attends it, shall be proportionably great; And GOD will Honour above others at the Last Day, *those* who are *Zealous* for his Honour here.

He that Converteth a Sinner (saith St. James) *from* *Jas. 5. 20.*
the error of his way, shall save a Soul from Death, and
shall hide a multitude of Sins. Now if he who gives a Cup of Cold Water to a Disciple, shall not lose his Reward, what shall his Happiness and Glory be, who rescues Souls from endless Destruction, secures them from Misery and Unquenchable Fire, and so effectually covers Sins, that Infinite Justice shall never find them out?

And

Dan. 12. 3. And *they who turn many to Righteousness*, (as the Prophet tells us) whether it be by Advice or Correction, or Example, *shall Shine as the Stars for ever and ever*, with a peculiar, distinguishing, and Eternal Brightness.

And shou'd not the hopes of this Infinite Reward, inspire us with Holy Zeal, Undaunted Resolution, and Invincible Patience? Make us despise both the Smiles and Frowns of Fortune and of Men, the Uncharitable Censures of some, and Prophane Scoffs of others? Make us constant in our Endeavours against *Vice*, as those Stars are in their Motions, which we hope hereafter in Glory to Outshine?

And what a Joyful Surprize will it be, to those Happy Souls, who here have ever burn'd with Zeal and Love, to find in the other World, their Glories equal to their Wishes, and infinitely beyond their too narrow hopes! When Mansions of Peace, shall be their Habitations, Angels their Friends, and perfect Spirits their Companions! When Praise shall be their Employment, and GOD himself their *exceeding Great Reward*!

And if Souls in the other World retain any knowledge, of those who here have been their most Intimate Friends (as I hope and believe they shall) then what Transports of Love and Divine Friendship, what Endearments and Gratulations, shall be among those happy Spirits, who have in this World been Fellow-Labourers in Advancing *Reformation*, and Fellow-Sufferers for their Zeal against *Vice*?

How will it add to their Raptures (tho almost Infinite before) to relate over to one another, the Difficulties they here Surmounted, with all the Troubles and Calamities they suffer'd! How sometimes they were Encourag'd and Supported, and the good Improvement they made of it! How again they were oppos'd in their good Purposes and Designs, yet were not diverted from them by any Opposition! How they were often expos'd to Publick Disgrace and Scorn, their best Actions being foully mis-represented, yet GOD supported them under these Tryals, inspir'd them with a Generous Contempt of all Unjust Reflections, rais'd them up unexpected Friends, and bless'd their poor Labour,

with

with surprizing Successes! How when they were exhorted by the Ministers of Religion chearfully to go on in their Masters, Service, and to depend on his Word, for a Glorious Reward, they believ'd and they obey'd; they recruited their *Lamps* with fresh Oyl, and their *Zeal* continu'd Flaming, Bright, and Strong to the last, so that nothing cou'd obscure or weaken, or even resist it! But that now at last, they find all the Promises of GOD Graciously fulfill'd, and therefore have cause to Praise him for all their Sufferings, *since their light Afflictions, which were but for a Moment, have wrought for them, a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory!*

Methinks like *Moses* from *Pisgah*, we may now take a Prospect of the Land of Bliss, and see those who here us'd to meet together, for *Religion* and *Devotion*, for Suppressing *Vice* and Promoting *Reformation*, welcoming one another into the Heavenly Regions, with Joy in their Looks, and Glory about their Heads, and nothing to be heard but Anthems and Hallelujahs!

Thus my Brethren, I trust in GOD it will be with you another day, but seeing we are as yet in the Wilderness, Let us have our Faces always directed towards the Promis'd Land: Our Journey can't be long; let us not be Frighten'd at the Dangers or Difficulties of the way, but go on Courageously in it, and Endless Peace and Joy, shall soon succeed our Toil and Labour.

ERRATA.

Page 4 line 30. read are of greater necessity. p. 12. l. 27. r. Warm in their Advices. p. 16. last l. r. the more they will. p. 22. l. 27. r. Zealous Magistrates. p. 25. l. 24. r. indispensable. p. 39. l. 25. r. of their Blood, rather than their Money. p. 43. l. 24. r. escap'd. p. 59. l. 33. leave out --- yet. p. 60. l. 7. r. comprehend. There are several Errata's in the Pointings.